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THE GENIUS OF JUDAISM.

THE

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OF

JUDAISM.

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BY

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SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

1833.

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PRINTED BY
WHITEFRIARS.

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THE GENIUS OF JUDAISM.

CHAPTER I.

WITH THE ISRAELITE EVERY THING IS ANCIENT, AND NOTHING IS OBSOLETE.

THE existence of the "peculiar people" professing the ancient Jewish faith has long been an object of religious conviction, and of philosophical curiosity. The Hebrew separated from the Christian, at a period of the highest civilisation holds an anomalous position in society; and with some truth it may be said, that he exists in a supernatural state. The Genius of Judaism remains immutable, requiring every concession, but yielding none;

perpetuating human institutions, which, from their very nature, passed away, and still cherishing the prejudices of barbarous æras. But that the Christian of the nineteenth century should remain for the Hebrew the Christian of the ninth, is a moral anachronism.

It will not be by taking a popular view of the manners of this singular people that we shall allay the fanaticism of Jew or Christian. We must learn to feel like Jews when we tell of their calamities, and to reason like Christians when we detect their fatuity.

The history of the Hebrews developes those permanent principles which are still operating on their insulated race, and which, through a long series of ages, by separating the Israelite from the Christian, have occasioned a reciprocal ignorance of their modes of thinking, their motives of conduct, their

dissimilar customs, and their irreconcilable differences. Fewer misconceptions and less erroneous opinions are formed of the castes of the Hindoos, than of the actual condition, and of the feelings, and the conduct of a whole people domiciliated among the nations of Europe, and now far more numerous than they were in their land of Palestine.

Christians, who have written on Jewish affairs, frequently describe customs and opinions as if they solely related to the former state of the Hebrews; not aware that customs and rites which are perfectly oriental, are still exhibiting in the domestic day of the Jewish citizen, whether a native of Berlin or Amsterdam, of Paris or of London. The close of the Jewish history is imagined to be the final destruction of their holy city; but this people have survived their metropolis, their kingdom, and their code: and a terrible interval of more than fifteen

centuries of merciless persecutions, of heroic struggles, of blasting calumnies, of martyrdoms, and of expulsions, constitute the modern history of the Hebrews.

Sects, and even nations, have had their dates prescribed, and, in their weakness, at length dissolving into others, they lose their very name. But this obdurate and anomalous people are found in every state extinct as a body politic, yet unchanged, and perhaps unchangeable, as a community. Exiles even in their birth-place; struck out of the number of nations, yet still a nation; the chosen of God, and the persecuted of man; looked on as sacred, and held as contemptible. For these dispersed hordes, toleration or persecution have proved equally fatal. Toleration, in a war of insult, permits but an ignominious existence; and Persecution, in a war of extermination, immolates its victims. Stigmatised or proscribed, their very name has

entailed on them a proverbial odium, and they are still enduring the anathema of their immortal legislator, that "they should become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord should send them."

Look at the Jewish year as it is traced in their own calendar*. For the Israelite, its penitential fasts and its melancholy commemorations perpetuate the sad annals of his nation, far more than its festivals remind him

* The Jews anciently had calendars, which commemorated the great events of their nation, which are occasionally referred to in the Talmud. The *Megillot Taanith*, i. e. the volume of affliction or fasting, which Calmet has noticed, but probably had never consulted, and, judging by the title, imagined it to be one of these ancient calendars, contains only the Jewish festivals and fasts. In the preface and notes of the learned Meyer de Jejunis may be seen the controversy respecting the inconsistency of the title with the work. Leo of Modena, however, informs us, that from the 17th of *Tamuz*, or June, till the 9th of *Ab*, or July, some Jews abstain from flesh and wine. In this fast of three weeks,

of its departed glory. The virtues of adversity, at least, are theirs.

The Hebrews are the only people in Europe whose present history and whose existing character are influenced by an origin which does not enter into the annals of mankind, and by causes recorded in the most primeval period of society. To comprehend what is passing, even in the scope of our own experience, we must consult a code of legislation and a ritual which governed them in

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all those days had been calamitous to the Jewish people. (*Historia degli Riti Hebraici*, c. 8.) Every month of the Jewish year is marked by these melancholy commemorations. Besides these, there are particular fasts instituted by Jews residing in different countries, for their local afflictions, among the Turkish, the Italian, and the Polish nations. Such have preserved, traditionally, certain epochs of misery which did not enter into their general history.

The learned Benedictine Genebrard, among other translations of rabbinical works, has furnished a Latin version of the Hebraic calendar.

a very different state of society, and in an oriental climate. Their code, their creed, and themselves as a people, are now existing as they always existed. With the Israelite every thing is ancient, but nothing is obsolete.

The Hebrew, a vagrant or a captive amidst the famed cities of Greece or Rome, could hardly, even in the luxuriant hope of the Israelitish faith, have imagined that, when their pomp and glories should be covered with sand and grass, the laws of Moses should govern races unborn, and in climates unknown. In the vision of their own Ezekiel, the Israelites had witnessed, or imagined they had witnessed, the subversion of empires, the apparition of the winged ministers of four great dominions moving amidst their wreath of fire, each by his terrible wheel, "turning not when they went, for every one went straight forwards," but "the living

spirit was in the wheels," like "a wheel in the middle of a wheel." One monarchy crushed another. The Babylonians had been struck down by the Persians, the Persians had fallen to the Greeks, and the Greeks had bowed to the Romans. And now two thousand years have passed away, and "wheels" not shadowed forth in the mystical vision of Ezekiel have also "been lifted up from the earth," yet the lone house of Jacob endureth, as the kindled bush where God lay, contemplated by the inspired legislator, "burning with fire, but not consumed."

CHAPTER II.

A MORE INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE JEWISH FEELINGS, AND THEIR HISTORY, REQUIRED.

THE revolutions of the House of Israel have been too often unrecorded by the incurious fugitives themselves, busied in transplanting themselves on foreign soils: they were negligent, perhaps too indignant, to dwell on their own history. At an early period of modern Judaism, when their Rabbins, whose minds had never strayed from their Medrassehs, presumed to become historians, they were wholly incompetent to the task. A thousand years had been suffered to elapse without the appearance of a single Jewish historian: but when the Rabbins saw that the

antiquity, that is, the authenticity, of their traditions, ever more cherished by them than their holy Pentateuch, became doubtful, and were disputed by the anti-traditionists, they attempted to demonstrate their antiquity by a meagre catalogue of generations, always opening with the year of the creation, by which they pretended they had preserved an unbroken line of traditions. In parallel situations mankind have always acted alike. The same scene now opened among the Jews, as afterwards among the modern Christians, in their efforts to reject the pretended traditions of papal tyranny. Jewish Reformers or Protestants, as the Caraites may be distinguished, often arose to relieve themselves from the degrading servitudes, and the bewitching superstitions of rabbinical Judaism. These Rabbins, in attempting to become their own annalists, relied on the ignorance of their own people, while they held in contempt the

authentic records of those Christian nations, whom, not unjustly, they held as idolatrous; but the forgeries of the Talmudical genius often correct themselves by a tissue of absurd anachronisms and narratives of imaginary persons.*

It is only since the discovery of that wondrous art which conveys to distant ages the sighs of the oppressed, that we find some memorials of themselves, left among the unhappy

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* The *Sepher Juchasin* of ZACUTO, or "Book of Genealogies," is the most important of the Jewish histories; but it has not met with the luck of a translator, from the circumstance of having some antichristian passages, which might be easily expunged. We have the meagre *Semach David*, of the Seed of David, by Ganz, ill translated by Vorstius. Gentius has given a better version of Solomon-ben-Verga's *Scevet Jehudah*, or the Rod of Judah. Verga was a Spanish physician, who collected sixty-four afflictions of his people, among which he classes "public disputations with Christians," and "the number of false Messiahs;" but he regales his fancy with the pomp and magnificence of the processional entrance into the temple on the day of expiation.

of mankind, by which alone we can become intimate with their secret feelings. The modern Jews, after their frequent flights from Spain and Portugal, when they settled into communities in different parts of Europe, but more particularly in Holland, seem to have wantoned in the freedom of the press. After the suppression of their hidden feelings for a long series of years, joyfully they poured out their wounded spirits in volumes, which invigorated their faith, or avenged the *Autos da Fé* performing on their relatives who had not participated in the good fortune of abandoning their homes. These rare works, composed in the native languages of the emigrants, are not always written by mere rabbins, but by

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These rabbinical histories do not reach lower than the middle of the sixteenth century. It is to be regretted that the learned Menasseh ben Israel, the celebrated Jewish deputy to Cromwell, did not complete his design of an *Historia Judaica*.

learned men, physicians, military men, merchants, and nobles; who, from their birth having been taught to persevere in the dissimulation of their catholicism, flew from their fathers' land to embrace Judaism, at once to allay the torture of their conscience, and elude the fires of the inquisition. Unacquainted with these effusions of the Jewish feelings since their dispersion, and confined as these works were doubtless to the circle to whom they were addressed, the genius of Judaism has remained veiled to the Christian, as if the shekinah still was resting in "the holy of holies."

The commiseration due to the miserable, the protection claimed by the oppressed, and the vindication of the calumniated, were only accorded by reformed Christianity. It is evident that it will not be by taking a vulgar view of the manners of the Hebrews in their abject state—and much less by keeping alive

the rancour of our barbarous and Gothic ancestors, who decided on the true faith by the ordeal of Duel—that the Christian could collect any real information, or form any rational conception of this insulated people, with whose fate Christianity still deeply sympathises; for in Judaism we trace our Christianity, and in Christianity we are reminded of our Judaism. But those who seal their faith on the Pentateuch, and those who rejoice in a new dispensation by the Gospel, the adherents to the first or the second Testament, must equally endure the correction which truth must sometimes inflict, till that day shall arrive when the union of philosophy with Christianity, already advanced, may, at some far distant time reform even rabbinical Judaism itself. Unquestionably, in the revolutions of human opinions, the sympathy of learned Christians have enlarged the narrow and insulated genius of Judaism; and it

was then, and only then, that the Israelites have found writers, who, as they became more conversant with this people themselves, have dropped balm on their ulcerated feelings; for the hearts of such historians, indeed, were soon deeply engaged with their sad story.

If it be permitted by human sagacity to discover the causes which have influenced the singular fate of the Jewish people, it must be sought by a more intimate knowledge of their feelings and their history, than has fallen to the share of ridiculing Polytheists, of hostile Christians, and of doting Rabbins.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAWS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE CONSTITUTE THEIR RELIGION.

THE first miracle of Judaism was the divine institution of the religion.

To promulgate the sublime dogma of the unity of JEHOVAH, the Creator embracing all nature, the first government of the Israelites was Theocracy.

"The earth shook and the heavens also dropped in the presence of God *." The devouring fires of Sinai proclaimed the de-

* Psalm lxviii. 8. The awful vision is first described in Exodus, xix. 16, and further in Deut. iv. 10. Another still more beatific, was subsequently granted to the elders of Israel, when invited by Moses to ascend with him,

liverance of the law of Moses. The apparition of the Deity—an apparition without similitude—rested before the eye of mortal man. Three millions of human witnesses attested and trembled*. From amidst the dense cloud

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before this servant of the Eternal passed into the midst of the cloud. It has all the indistinctness of whatever is superhuman, when the mortal becomes a spectator of an object of which he is unacquainted with a prototype. The Deity appeared, as if his feet were resting on a paved way, inlaid with stars, amidst the azure of the sapphire, the aerial substance of the Heavens, lucid and serene.—ABOAB, *Parafrasis Contentadas*, p. 259.

* CARDOSO, a zealous Hebrew, calculates the number. The six hundred thousand mentioned in Scripture, consisted only of the warriors of Israel, between the age of twenty to sixty. The aged, the children, the women, the domestics, would authorise the number of the millions, and less than millions would not satisfy the eager imaginations of the Jews as the witnesses of the authentic mission. It is curious to add that Count Las Casas in replying to an enquiry of Napoleon, after he had made a calculation of the Israelites, confirmed the Mosaic account, which some infidel speculators had suspected to have been greatly exaggerated.

hanging on the mountain, "the voice of the words" sanctified and established Judaism for eternity.

On this awful revelation to a whole people, rests the foundation of the Jewish faith in the law of Moses. The Pharisees exultingly replied to the blind man, miraculously recovered to sight by Jesus, "We know that *God spake unto Moses.*" MAIMONIDES has this curious remark, "that Israel did not believe in Moses merely from the miracles which he operated, for prodigies are no certain evidence of a divine mission, since the magicians of Egypt practised with spurious ones. It is the character of the Mosaic miracles which stamps their authority. All those in the desert were the simple operations of the divine will to supply their immediate necessities; when the people were famished the manna fell; when perishing with thirst the rock flowed. "Yet not," Maimonides

proceeds, "from miracles only do we believe in the servant of God. It was at the foot of the holy mountain that our ancestors beheld, and not by the intermediate sight of others, 'the devouring fires of heaven,' and listened to the cry of the voice from the cloud, 'Moses! Moses! go thou and speak to the people!'" For the closing argument to demonstrate the authenticity of the Mosaic mission, Maimonides appeals to the apparition of mount Sinai—a miracle manifest to the assembled nation at its feet. "The spirit of the law was itself the greatest prodigy," observes the German Müller.

The most ancient legislators, to enforce their codes by irrefragable authority, have indeed pretended to deliver them as of divine origin. The Cretan Minos received his code from Jupiter, and Solon from Minerva; Lycurgus ascribed to Apollo the laws delivered to the Lacedemonians, and Numa in

his cavern sought for a nymph in the solitude. Such were the elegant fictions of an allegorical religion, or the political inventions of statesmen who consecrated, by the name of a deity, laws which else had nothing in themselves but what human wisdom and a reverence for natural justice were adequate to provide for Commonwealths; but these, like all other human institutions, have decayed and perished. The fabulous deities of Polytheism never manifested themselves by a prodigality of miracles; but the sublime Hebrew appeals to "the many great and terrible things their eyes had seen from the God of Israel." The laws of other legislators have passed away, for their views were transient as the glory of the people to whom they were administered—there was no holy principle in them of enduring potency to carry them beyond the state they governed. But the laws of Moses—unaltered as they

were first delivered to his race, breathing the inspiration in which they originated, and binding together the spirit of religion with the spirit of polity—after countless ages are now operating on their unchangeable people, still ancient and still our contemporaries!

By this miraculous interposition of Providence the laws of this people constitute their religion; a legal ordinance became a moral duty; the civil order from that moment was bound up with the ecclesiastical; and "the alliance between Church and State" was never so indissolubly built up together as among the religious Hebrews. A countless series of ages has passed away, and "the fewest of people" are still a nation, standing singular in the universe. The inheritance of a divine code kindled amid their persecutions the inspiration of their faith, as hereafter we shall show.

The divine origin of their laws, their immutability, their duration, and their supernatural

influence imbued the spirit of this sacerdotal people. Everywhere, and at all hours, was their law, or some symbol of their law, like the works of the Deity, kept in their sight. It was variously worn on their persons; it was nailed to the door-posts of their habitations; it formed their daily occupations in the morning, the noon, and the evening sacrifice. All Nature was consecrated to Religion; for the first fruits, a portion of the harvests and certain animals, were dedicated to its service. "The *land* is my own!" was the decree of the Lord. Judaism was in their fields, in the unmixed seed, and the ungrafted fruit; in the uncircumcised tree; in the ablution of the stream, and in the separation of the pure from the impure*. Their great festivals were connected with the productions of

* The distinctions which prohibited the use of certain animals was an admirable precept of the great legislator, though it was subsequently abused, and even rendered ridiculous, by the Rabbinists.

every season. The Passover could not be kept till their flocks furnished the paschal lamb; the Pentecost till the wheat had ripened for the fresh loaves of propitiation; and the thick boughs and branches could not cover their tabernacles till they had gathered in their vineyards and their olive grounds. The Israelites were reminded of their religious festivals by the living commemorations of nature. The whole earth became one vast synagogue.

Such they were in their Holy Land, and such they remain. The Hebrews are still accustomed to mark the seasons of the year and the dates of events by religious feasts and fasts. Still they are watching the sunset which brings their own sabbath to all their habitations; the new moon to hold its solemn celebration, and the earliest star, that calls them back to life, to break their penitential fast. The thunder or the rainbow receive

the grace they equally give for their bread and their wine. The God of Israel is the God of Nature, and they adore the Creator in his creation.

The kistorian of the Jewish people, in the curious apology of his nation, delivered their opinion, and described the enthusiasm of these subjects of a Theocracy, for their divine law. "We consider the books of our law as divine; and so we term them. We profess to observe them inviolably: and, if it be necessary, to maintain them we joyfully die. This has caused such a number of the captives of our nation voluntarily to endure such torments and face such a variety of deaths, without a murmur at the laws and the traditions of our fathers. Who of the Greeks," exclaims the heroic Hebrew, "have suffered as these men?" A Greek writer has expressed his admiration at the unconquerable spirit of the Hebrews; the polytheist is astonished that

neither ruin, nor ignominy, nor persecution, nor death in its most formidable shape, have forced them to renounce the faith of their fathers; insensible to fear, incredible is their unbroken constancy in the strictest observance of their laws."

To educate a nation by their laws, was a political institution peculiar to the Jewish people. Other legislators in their ordinances have not taught the people to practise them, but Moses with the precept never ceases to enforce the obedience; for the prescribed duty, if unperformed, incurs a specific punishment. The sublime legislator led his people like children; and the immortal historian of the Hebrews was struck by this great singularity. Thus speaks Josephus:—"We live under our law as under the care of the father of a family; and that we may not fail in them on the plea of ignorance, our legislator, not satisfied that we should hear them once

or twice, has obliged us to abstain from all labours one day in the week, that we may apply ourselves to hear and to learn them; a circumstance which all other legislators seem to have neglected." Josephus reproaches other nations for not living according to their laws; for it is only when they are violated, that men are taught their transgressions by others; so ignorant of their own laws are other nations, that they have been compelled to have recourse to a profession in society who make the laws their whole study. Exultingly adds the historian: "With us there is no one who is not as familiar with the laws as with his own name. We learn them from our childhood; they are engraven on our hearts, and rarely can be transgressed, or the transgression incurs its punishment. Hence that admirable conformity in our minds and our customs so prevalent among us, for wherever we are we believe in the omnipre-

sence of our Maker. From the lips of our women and our servants, who all share in the same conviction, may be learnt the rules of moral conduct."

CHAPTER IV.

THE THEOCRACY.

THE first government of the Israelites was a THEOCRACY; a government unexampled in the annals of mankind. The classical historian of his nation, who composed his work in the Greek language, was so perplexed to describe the spiritual and mysterious government of the Jewish people, that Josephus for this purpose combined two Greek words in the term Θεοκρατια, Theocracy, or God's rule; a government administered by men, but the sovereignty was held by the Divinity.*

The Jewish history, therefore, resembles

* SPENCER, whose erudition and piety combine with philosophical sagacity, in his *De Legibus Hebræorum*,

that of no other people, for it combines divine with human events; a law received from Heaven more closely connects the human being with the Creator, and this people are therefore distinguished as "the chosen." But, however favoured in this respect, the Hebrews have ever participated in the common fate of the sons of Adam, subjected to the infirmities of their kind, stubborn, or vacillating, driven to and fro by the passions of the multitude.

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has observed how other nations at length came to prefer the Jewish Theocracy to any form of government, and, emulous of such happiness, seem to have instituted a *Diocracy*. What the scholiast in Aristophanes mentions, is an instance. Among the Athenians the notion was attempted to be promulgated by the advice of the oracle of Apollo, which declared that, "They should get rid of their kings, and make Jupiter king." Ad. Nub. init. p. 122. SPENCER, *De Leg. Heb.* p. 188.

It is probable that the Athenians spread that oracle abroad, that they, under the show of religion, might free themselves from the regal power, which they found oppressive.

Montesquieu has developed the vital, or actuating principle of the three species of governments; if, then, it be the nature of the Republican government to be maintained by Virtue *, of the Monarchical by Honour, and of the Despotic by Fear, the operative principle of the THEOCRATIC is Religion.

The development of this solitary principle gives an unity to the whole history of the Jews, from their first period to their latest. The Israelites were the most religious of all the nations of the earth; and their story is that of a religion, instituted by the Deity, and of its decline amid the corruptions, the pride, and the fatuity of man.

The Israelitish, or Theocratic government,

* *Virtue* is a term so abstract, so ambiguous, and always so relative, that our philosopher was compelled, after the publication of his great work, to explain his meaning with more precision. In his "Defence" he declared that by *Virtue*, in a republic, he only understood *Patriotism*, or public virtue.

has been classed among republics, being a government without a king. But it was a model of society beyond all human contrivance; it was a government of tutelage, and no form of government approached its simplicity and its magnificence. Had men been more perfect, it was a state which would have everlastingly endured.

During the theocracy, this agrestic and military people preserved that political equality which human institutions have vainly attempted to realise under the forms of popular government. The laws of nature, and the laws of God, the Earth and the Creator, were the objects which incessantly occupied the thoughts of the hebrew citizen—the field, the vineyard, and the altar! The cultivator at the evening-hour returning homewards, beheld the elders seated at the gates of his city, holding a court of judicature.

Among the Hebrews there were no privileged orders; the only rank in society was age; the only title, the paternal; and all the races were included under the affectionate term of "The Children of Israel." The sublime legislator was not unmindful of the humblest member of the community; slavery had its limited term, and the poor man had his "year of release." The unequal distribution of property, that unavoidable evil among other people, was prevented in the Mosaic code by an agrarian law, but unaccompanied by its injustice, or by the danger of its sudden violence. "The land was the Lord's," and in Israel the prodigal could not alienate for ever the patrimony of his descendants, since, though he might deprive himself of his possessions, the land reverted to his indigent race, in the great sabbatic years.

The Eternal designed for the Hebrews a

religion which combined with its worship a doctrinal morality; unlike those fabulous religions which allured and excited their votaries by impure rites. The Hebrews were to be separated from those surrounding "seven nations, greater and mightier than themselves." The beatitude of their religion was to be inviolate. Their LAWS were their RELIGION; and their Religion, descending from heaven, sent forth a mightier impulse than that uncertain Patriotism, which is its imperfect substitute among other nations.

In the election of a privileged race, as far as we are permitted to judge, the Deity designed his Hebrews as a human instrument to recover the knowledge of the Creator; a knowledge which had been lost by the worshippers of the heavenly bodies or of statues, the rude symbols of the divinity; by sensual corruptions, which had disguised the celestial origin

of religion *. But Israel, however "chosen," still remained but a fragment of human nature.

Two things therefore required prevention in this religious and sublime government; first, the proneness of the people to return to the allurements of idolatry; and secondly, their national vanity, which prompted them to imitate their neighbours in the pomp of a monarchy.

We may observe the manner in which both these violations of the THEOCRACY were provided against.

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* Maimonides, *De Idolol.* lib. i. Selden, *De Diis Syriis.* Jurieu, *Hist. des Dogmes,* part iii. c. ii. Diodorus Siculus, Bib. lib. i., tells us that idolatry originated in men who mistook the stars for immortal gods, and worshipped the sun and moon under the names of Osiris and Isis. The Egyptians deified the elements by names; yet even in this degraded state there was always a Father of intelligent beings, or, as Homer describes Jupiter, "*Father* and *king* of men and *gods.*" Varro confessed there were at least thirty thousand gods of the Greeks and Romans.

The Deity proclaimed himself "the God of Israel," and "a jealous God;" for the Israelites were surrounded by people who offered all the seductions of Pagan rites. The Deity commanded that a sanctuary should be raised wherein he might dwell among them *; and it was ordained that Israel should be "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation;" and long afterwards, the apostle, reminding them of their greatness, told them, "Ye are a ROYAL PRIESTHOOD and a *peculiar people* †."

The Deity manifested himself in the double character of a celestial and a terrestrial sovereign. Wherever the Israelite turned he was reminded of the presence of his God and of his King. His King was in heaven: his God was on earth.

The Israelite among idolaters, as David himself complained in his exile, was often

* Exodus, xix. 6. † 1 Peter, ix.

tauntingly asked "where was his God*?" As the Hebrew cast his eyes frequently towards heaven in the fervour of prayer, the Pagan, even as late as the Roman period, imagined that the Jew worshipped the material sky. The ancients conceived nothing but what was visible and palpable; even the mysteries of polytheism were scenical, and every divinity was an actor in a romance. Painters and sculptors have been the great corrupters of all divine conceptions, and are so to this day; the Deity is still represented in the imbecility of old age, and the Virgin and the Child are oftener worshipped than the God of nature. In the humiliating theology of Homer, we discover no trace of a spiritual and incorporeal nature. The frequent lapses into idolatry of the Israelite evinced his susceptibility of sensual impres-

* Psalm xlii. 3.

sions—the stealth into dark and voluptuous rites; nor had these criminal lapses been quelled but by the terrors of "the jealous God-ruler," when the celestial Sovereign manifested his dominion by his miracles.

To fix their vacillating faith, and to approach to their material conceptions, the Deity gratified his people by the appearance of a human sovereignty, and issued his edicts as a legislative and a military sovereign. Moses was even permitted to adopt into the exterior of his religion many of the rites, the ceremonies, and the customs of the Egyptians, and of the neighbouring nations. But the gross idolatry was abolished when the Legislator directed their practice to the worship of "the God of Israel," and the revealed doctrine of his solitary omnipotence.

The THEOCRACY therefore admitted into the Mosaic institution the gorgeous magnificence of a regal government. The Israelite

in the Tabernacle of his God stood in the palace of his Sovereign; the altar was the throne, and on the altar of the covenant lay the code of inspiration, the great charter of Israel. The first minister of the Deity, to whom his sacred will was confided, announced, by the amazing splendour of the pontifical robes and the mystical pectoral, his exalted station*; while the Levites, like the numerous attendants of royalty, stood arrayed in an uniform livery, but their hallowed symbols and instruments marked their respective offices. The furniture and the utensils displayed the

* Even so late as the fall of the Jewish dominion, when the nation had become a tributary people to the Romans, the pontifical robe of the chief sacrificer, to which was attached the pectoral, was deposited by the Romans in the citadel, where there was a Roman garrison, as a pledge of the fidelity of the Jews, who could not perform their great ceremonies without this sacred vestment. It was only when the Romans felt no dread of the Jews that its use was permitted.

rich pomp and the beautiful ornaments in which earthly monarchs and their subjects equally delight—the embroidered tapestry, the draperies of fine linen, the variegated needlework, the transparent curtains to mark out the divisions, the golden branched lights, the altar fuming with incense, and the columns raised on brazen bases. There too, were viewed the dedicated loaves, arranged on a table of gold; the golden vases holding "the strong wine to be poured unto the Lord;" the ewers "to wash with water that they die not;" and the flesh daily provided on the sacrificial altar. All these seemed to indicate the banquet of a mortal monarch, but they beheld the banquet inviolable, for ever renewed, and for ever untouched. The veil which never was to be lifted, the cherubims spreading their mystical wings, the Propitiatory where the cloud of glory hung over "the Holy of Holies;" every object around, combined

the perpetual recollection that the Israelite found the palace of his Sovereign to be the temple of his God.

The Jews had early become a military, as well as a sacerdotal people, and their conquests were proclaimed in the name of the Lord of Hosts. *Jehovah Sebuot*, their god and their chief, was borne amid the four great standards of Israel; and in their military march the ark of alliance, covered by a veil of celestial blue, was guarded by an escort of Levites. To lay the hand on the Ark was incurring the penalty of death*. That "glory of Israel" was the visible sign of the presence of the Deity. The eye of every man in that great army was ever turned towards it, and marching as it moved, they took their respective stations as it rested. The army of

* Once when the ark appeared to be leaning on one side, a Levite was condemned to die, only for attempting to hold it up.

Israel was "the camp of the Eternal," and, what occurred to no other people but this sacerdotal race, the Levite alone was privileged to blow the silver trumpet which sounded to the charge. Even to this day the solemn response of a Jewish congregation on the Sabbath, is the loud cry of "Holy! holy! holy! is the LORD OF HOSTS."

In the Theocracy idolatry was treason; only to sit in the shadow of a tree, where a deity of stone was placed, was criminal in an Israelite. The slightest gesture, which indicated idolatry, was "an iniquity to be punished by the judge*." The law against

* Deut. xvii. "If there be found among you man or woman who hath served *other gods*, thou shalt bring that man or that woman which have committed that wicked thing into thy gates, and shalt *stone them with stones till they die.*" Job, the antiquity of whose sublime poem is undoubted, anxious of clearing himself of all imputation, declared, "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been

idolatrous Jews is that of open insurrection. Even the imputation was fatal. The Lord had announced himself to be "a jealous God." A religious apostacy, under any other government, was no political offence, but with the Jews it was a state crime.

It does surprise us to discover that this people, to whom the singleness of the Supreme Being had been so undoubtedly manifested, were perpetually lapsing into the vilest rites of their neighbours. Blessed by a revealed religion, and educated by such a multiplicity of ceremonial laws, still was the Israelite's a heart of flesh, sensual and carnal. Had the Hebrews not indeed been like other men, the purity and conviction of the faithful

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secretly enticed, or *my mouth hath kissed my hand,* this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God that is above." *To kiss the hand* was an act of adoration among the Pagans. The custom is oriental; and to this day the religious Jew, when he touches the Pentateuch, practises it.

had otherwise not obtained their triumph. We must not imagine that idolatry simply consisted of the worship of those "dead things called gods of gold and silver," or "some vile beast laid over with vermilion set fast in a wall." Idolatry was a superstition which touched all the infirmities of the human heart—the darker passions were at work with the sensual seductions, and the splendid festival of the idolater often veiled terrific rites, or initiated into infamous mysteries. This was the idolatry of those "strange gods" which offered a ready aliment for the secret and wavering passions of the rebellious Israelites.

In the Theocracy it was foreseen, that, like other people, its subjects would become weary of that paternal and sublime government; and we discover that a human royalty was early contemplated. It was promised—in kindness it was delayed—afterwards the Israelites

were warned, when the people clamoured to be governed by the will of one man.

Despotism seems to be the native growth of the East. Man, cradled in servitude, becomes fitted to listen to his fate in the irrevocable mandates of a tyrant. The climate which dissolves the energy of the heart, and the indolence which loves to gaze, have rendered the Orientals the children of political institutions, and they have always been prone to look on an earthly king with a sort of idolatry. An eastern sovereign seems to be a personification of their own weak passions; his pomp is their vanity, and his power their pride. A sovereign, subject to the laws of his people, a constitutional king, could not exist in the minds of those who have never formed any notion of popular freedom.

In Egypt, Moses had indignantly witnessed the abuse of the Regal power; and

not less had the sage observed the petty despots of the neighbouring nations of Israel. The inspired foresight of this awful legislator contemplated the future existence of a *constitutional monarch.*

Moses perceived that even his perfect government would weary the inconstancy of man, and that mortal passions would corrupt even a divine institution. Moses, with prescient wisdom, limited the power intrusted into the hands of royalty, and even prescribed a daily task to the future sovereign. The legislator rendered the Jewish king the most guileless man in his dominions.

The sovereign was to be elected from among their own brethren; no stranger was to sit on the throne of Israel. A foreigner might change the constitution, or raise up a faction in direct opposition to the national interest. The king was not to multiply

horses; a force of cavalry, in a land where horses are scarce, might become a standing army endangering their liberties, or might transfer the seat of dominion. It is particularly specified that the Jewish monarch shall never return with his people into Egypt: "Ye shall henceforth return no more that way." Egypt, for the Israelites at the Mosaic period, was their Father-land; unwilling exiles, their human hearts, at each remove in the lone desert, but dragged a lengthening chain, while they hankered after their home delights, "the fat onions and the flesh pots." Judaism could only exist in a constant triumph over idolatry. The Jewish monarch was not to have many wives, nor was he to accumulate great treasure; so early were women and wealth dreaded as the corrupters of royalty. The life of the monarch was not to pass away in the list-

lessness of satiety; for, seated on his throne, daily with his own hand he was to transcribe the laws into a volume from the roll which was kept before the priests, "that his heart be not lifted up among his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left." There is no instance of a Jewish king making a new law; "the statutes and the judgments," unlike those of other nations, were not laid up in the dusty archives of a court of judicature, or subjected to the caprice of the executive power; they were deposited in the memories of the priests and in the hearts of the people; the laws were supreme. Had the constitutional king of Israel struck into the road of arbitrary power, he would have been arrested by the written voice of heaven;—the text placed before his eyes; for the divine institution of the Mosaic law is the fundamental principle

of Judaism. A tyrant would have been an atheist.*

* Deut. xvii. 14. Several extraordinary particulars relating to the priests and kings of that part of Ethiopia which borders on Egypt, are preserved by Diodorus Siculus, in his Bib. lib. iii. There seem to have been other sacerdotal nations besides the Israelites; perhaps a spurious imitation.

The priests of Meroë, whenever they deemed it necessary, despatched a messenger to the king to order him to die: they announced to him the will of the gods, and the crime of disobedience. "This was an ancient custom" observes that curious collector of our remotest antiquities, "and no king had ever resisted this fatal ordinance." It resembles the custom practised even in our days, when a Dey of Algiers was to resign his reign, that is, his life, by the mute avenger, who entered with the bowstring in his hand; and we are informed that no resistance was made on these occasions.

To return to the story of Diodorus. The magic of the sacerdotal ordinance was in one day dissolved. Ergamenes, who had been educated in the Grecian philosophy, was the first monarch who dared to reject the yoke, at once so fatal and ridiculous. He led his army to attack the fortress of the golden temple of the Ethiopians, and having massacred every priest, the rebellious king instituted a new religion. Whether this be a fable or a history of remote antiquity, it is perfectly oriental.

CHAPTER V.

THE DECLINE OF THE THEOCRACY.

No human government ever existed which has not opened a source of popular discontents; for every human institution is accompanied by its silent corruption, and the meridian of its excellence is only touching the first gradations of its decline. Models of ideal governments which have flattered the imagination, and that political equality, which in itself must include so much real inequality, have alike found their moral force too weak to reach to the secret passions of Man. The three great functions of a commonwealth, are the proposing — the debating — and the resolving of the

laws; functions which, in all the governments which man ever planned, are divided among different orders of society, but whose clashing interests no human wisdom can ever adjust*.

If men could imagine "that they were not in a good state when they were in the best," as SECKER has happily described the divine government of the Hebrews, the numberless expedients of human ingenuity must no longer be allowed to seduce our hopes. It is not strange that the Platos, the Mores, the Harringtons, and so many modellers of ideal republics, should have failed, when the most sublime of all legislators could not render his commonwealth so perfect as to endure for many ages.

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* In Harrington's Oceana this idea is developed with great ingenuity, and this truth is illustrated by a reference to those different states where these functions were diversely practised.—OCEANA, p. 18, edit. 1656.

The THEOCRACY existed in all its mysterious and miraculous state, while the Eternal was holding an immediate communication with his servant Moses; but even under the tranquil uniformity of that state, and while the people were protected by the paternal code, as the members of one great family, they were still wavering and indocile, passing with inconceivable facility from the fervour of obedience to sullen contumacy. Moses more than once hesitated to address the turbulent multitude; and so constantly were they incurring the upbraidings and menaces of the Lord, that in the Targum, or Jewish exposition of the Scriptures, the Book of Deuteronomy is called "the Book of Reproaches."

The mightiest of legislators, preparatory to his death, invoked Heaven and Earth to record that he had placed before his people life and death, and had sent forth his bene-

dictions and his curses to his children of Israel; he had warned them, that by the strict observance of this law, without addition or diminution, their existence depended as "a holy" and "a peculiar people." Never more than on that solemn farewell were this people of children stricken by terror and prophecy. The last appearance of Moses among his people, is an incident at once awful and pathetic; and the prescient imprecations, eloquent and terrible, present altogether a scene without a parallel in profane history.

Yet when Joshua, the minister and successor of Moses, partaking of the inspiration of his master, was "going the way of all earth," and desirous of fixing the last settlement of his government, the chief deemed it necessary to offer a choice to the people —"Whom they would serve? Whether the gods on the other side of the flood"—in which flood they had miraculously found

a path in the waters,—or "the gods of the Ammorites?" a people whose lands they now possessed. The veteran general delivered his own decision; "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." This option accorded to the people evidently indicates that these blind and sensual Israelites were disposed to divide their religion with the polluted rites, and the local gods of their neighbours; and that this "stiff-necked" race, though they had been favoured with the revelations of miracles and of their law—were yet in a state of doubt and indecision even during the Theocracy.

The Theocracy, however, still subsisted throughout the heroic era of the Judges. The voice of the Eternal was still heard, but the people remained volatile and vain; ambitious to vie with their neighbours, their eyes dwelt with longing on the pomp of mortal monarchs, the petty princes around them. In

their foolish pride they supplicated the heroic Gideon to be their king. The constitutional patriot indignantly rejected for himself and for his family, the spurious royalty.

But the Lord was "hiding his face from them." "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God"—is the Divine style allusive to the fabulous Deities of other nations, and for the punishment of this vain and restless people the Theocracy at length was suffered to share the fate even of ordinary human institutions. Samuel had become ancient, and his own degenerate race stood among the corrupters and the corrupted. The crisis had arrived when the Judges were themselves to be judged. The people were aggrieved; the Philistines were pressing upon them; and in tumult they hurried on to the retirement of the aged seer. They broke the slumbers of the old man; and the prophet, through a long and disturbed night,

revolved all that they had declared—all that he had meditated on in sadness. Indignant, the seer of other days perceived that the invisible majesty of the God of Israel was outraged by the substitution of a frail mortal: but the Lord consoled his last ancient servant: "Samuel, the people have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." The Israelites deposed their God, for God was their Sovereign. The menace of Heaven was the future silence of the Lord, when hereafter they should call on him. Samuel, in communicating the decree of Heaven, closed the direful denouncement by an invective against monarchical despotism, which the most elaborate declamations of republicans could only amplify. Inspiration itself no longer checked the virulence of the people, clamorous to have "a king to reign over them." Samuel, devoted to an aristocracy of

which he himself formed a part, judged of the sovereignty of a single person, by the petty despots who surrounded his holy commonwealth.

To have introduced into the Mosaic constitution as its chief, a human Sovereign, was a violation of its fundamental principle; it was an open revolt of the people against the Theocracy. The profound legislator had foreseen this calamity in the change of the Hebrew Republic; such inspiration was in his knowledge of the hidden workings of the human passions. Moses had anticipated this inevitable termination of the divine government. We have shown that an elective Monarchy had been contemplated, limited among "the royal Priesthood," and how the violence, or the capriciousness of regal power was to be over-ruled in the person of a constitutional Monarch, who, as Moses planned, was to have been at once a student,

a protector, and an administrator of the laws of Israel.

The Theocracy was now interrupted—it was only occasional under David, whose frequent cries attest its uncertain visitations. It is said to have ceased when Solomon, the first hereditary monarch, ascended the throne. The spirit from Heaven, obscure and uncertain, descended among that extraordinary race of Jewish Reformers called Prophets; of these there were Schools. Many were but pretenders, and few, inspired Sages. All now seemed but as the dim shadow of the past; and their inferior genius expounded dreams, and interpreted mystical allegories of portents and visions.

The Theocracy finally departed from Israel under the second Temple, and the mystical and miraculous appendages were no longer possessed by the Sovereign Pontiff. The oracle of the Urim and Thummim, whose alphabet, engraven on the pectoral, started

upwards instinct with inspiration, as it revealed the will of the Deity; the Ark—the celestial fire, the cloud of glory, were for ever absent; even the voice of Prophecy had ceased. From this period, we find no longer any circumstance supernatural in the Hebrew annals.

The Theocratic government had indeed left them its sublime and eternal principle of Religion, in the worship and the obedience of the Supreme Being. Its invisible chain still connected earth with heaven, and still holy were those immutable laws which bind man with man. But when the Lord forsook his people, and abandoned them to their own imaginations, we are taught a lesson unparalleled in the annals of any other people. In the pride of their madness we discover their human contrivances to maintain a spurious Theocracy; and the history of this people attests that even the principle of the purest

religion in the forsaken of God, may degenerate into a mere system of the minutest superstitions, and be superseded by casuistical disputations and doctrinal divisions; the abuse of the human understanding. We shall see, in the rabbinical ages, how man was enslaved by passive obedience, and the daily acts of life seemed a sort of witchcraft. This arbitrary pharisaical tyranny they substituted for the theocracy of their happier times, and talked among themselves of the miraculous *Bath Kol*, or "a voice from heaven;" or, in its more literal signification, and termed with oriental fancy, "the daughter of the voice." Lightfoot translates it, "the daughter of thunder." But as all human impostures and superstitions are doomed to become obsolete, this celestial interposition of a visionary voice became the ridicule of later ages.

We have seen the idea which Josephus has transmitted to us at a time when the

Christian æra had hardly commenced, of the more than human conviction of the divine origin of the law of Moses. After sixteen centuries of not inferior persecutions, their national faith, amid their flights and their exiles, in the last age, was still fortified by the same awful devotion. The inspiration of a divine code has been hereditary, and its influence over the Hebrews seems to be as supernatural as its origin,—resisting all human arguments, and immutable even in its impossibilities.

One of the great calamities of the Israelites at all times, has been too sanguine an application to themselves of that paternal style which the Creator addressed to his wayward children. Too often have these infants of society been forgetful of the menaces, the provocations, and the chastisements of the God of Israel, which surely have not been less in number than those benedictions which

they have so often forfeited, and those promises which they have so often delayed; and although it cannot be denied that they constitute the most religious people in the universe, yet no other nation has been so frequently reprobated as a stiff-necked generation.

For simple evidence of this overweening fondness of themselves, we must have recourse to the Jewish writers. I take one of modern times.

CARDOSO, among his *Excellencias de los Hebreos**, discovers the first excellence in the endearing expressions with which the Supreme Being has favoured his "especial people." The Jew has dexterously applied a passage in

* A rare and elaborate volume; I preserve the title, *Los Excellencias de los Hebreos por el Doctor Ishac Cardoso.* Amsterdam, 1679: 4to. The author was a learned physician, who, having practised with great reputation at Madrid, at length flew to Italy openly to profess his long-concealed Judaism. The *second* part, consisting of the *calumnies*, is, perhaps, less disputable than the *excellencies*.

Deuteronomy*. The Lord distinguished the great Patriarch by the most eminent title of "friend." Israel was called his "son," his "first-born," his "heir," his "servant." Whoever "touches his people touches the pupil of his eye." God distinguishes them as his "beloved," and "the espousal of the Divinity with his people Israel," a frequent allusion in the Scriptures, is dwelt on by CARDOSO with all the orientalism of rabbinical fancy. He runs through the ceremonies of a Jewish marriage, unfolding the mystical analogies, always insisting that "this espousal" was neither temporary nor conditional, but absolute and perpetual; for otherwise, he adds, the Deity would be subjected to the inconstant humours of a mortal sovereign; it would be as if the Omniscient could be wanting in prescience. He acknowledges that this

* Deut. vii. 6.

partiality of the Universal Parent for a people inconsiderable in number, and who by their conduct could never urge any pre-eminent claims to his divine favour, had occasioned the learned to vacillate in their opinions, and, in despair, to leave as inscrutable the will and the purpose of the Divinity. The descendants of Abraham, who had sacrificed to the Great First Cause, might be deemed not unworthy of this voluntary grace; but CARDOSO adds nothing to his argument when he illustrates the pleasure which the Creator takes in this particular creature by the trivial image of a gardener, who, without neglecting the other flowers of his raising, watchfully cultivates the favourite plant in his garden. Theologians, like painters, too frequently degrade the conception of the Divinity by polluting the sovereignty of nature with their own human and inadequate notions. On this topic, if CARDOSO be much too florid, SOUTH

is far too witty, who, as a Christian divine, has this remarkable passage on the Jewish apologist's vaunted "espousal of God's people."—"The truth is, they (the Jews) were all along a cross, odd, untoward sort of people, and such as God seemed to have *espoused* to himself, upon the very same account that Socrates espoused Xantippe, only for her extreme ill condition above all that he could possibly find or pick out of that sex, and so the fittest argument both to exercise and declare his admirable patience to the world."

The enthusiastic apologist for his people asserts that their present state is an evidence of their *everlasting* duration. Sion, though in her mournful widowhood, is not disconsolate. She suffers, but she knows how to suffer a temporary state of penitence; for in every chapter of the Jewish calamities as denounced by the prophets, by the side of the destruction of the people is placed their preservation;

menaces are tempered by promises, and although the malady is inevitable the medicine has not been denied. Even in the most ignominious suffering of his brothers, in those *Ghettos* or Jewish quarters to which they are nightly driven as a herd in many European cities, and in those badges of their tribes which they are compelled to bear about them, the red or the yellow hat, or the mark sewed on their dress, even these are, with this fervent Hebrew, a signal grace of Providence. CARDOSO, in Italy or Germany, exclaimed, "We are distinct not only in our habitations but in our habits; a circumstance indicative not so much of the contempt of other nations, as of the particular Providence which separated us from them for ever, and spared us their vices, which we are prone to acquire, when incurring the complaint of the Lord of the iniquity of Ephraim, when he mixed himself among the people; 'Ephraim is a cake not turned,' that is, half

an Israelite and half a heathen, half dough and half baked."

Such was the fanatical spirit of the Jews, on their first flights from Spain and Portugal. The miraculous result of a law "perfect and perpetual," as CARDOSO exclaims, in the awful conviction of its divine origin, has been exemplified among its followers; the effect is mighty and peculiar as the cause.

The Law of Moses can never fall into neglect while the principle of Judaism acts on its people; for it possesses a self-regenerating power. This law is not locked up in a clasped volume, to be consulted only by the administrators of the law, but is thrown open among the people, who themselves deliver it one to another. It is one of the "Thoughts" of Pascal, to show the distinction between a false and a true revelation, that Mahomet, in order that his own code might subsist, prohibited the reading, but Moses, that his

own should subsist, ordered that all the world should read it. It is decreed in the Laws of Moses that children shall be taught it; and to this day, the child's first accents are almost formed by "the holy language," as the Hebrews emphatically distinguish their's, till they acquire the holy language itself, at least by rote*. The Law of Moses inculcates that it should form the subject of their conversations, walking or sitting; and so familiar is this knowledge to the Jewish ear, that whenever their law is quoted in conversation, which it frequently is, it is usual with an auditor to chime in with the close of the passage, like a chant often repeated. The Pentateuch is delivered by sections corresponding with the sabbaths of the year, while each weekly section is further subdivided into two portions, delivered on two days weekly.

* Cardoso, *Excellencias de los Hebreos;* part i. 134.

At the close of the year "the Holy Law" has thus been twice repeated, and the mighty scroll is again joyfully unrolled to begin the new year. On this solemn occasion occurs the ceremony of a mystical nuptial of "The Bride and Bridegroom of the Law," in the persons of "two sons of the Covenant," elected to this temporary honour. When one of these has read the concluding sentence of the law, the other eagerly continues with its commencement, amidst the acclamations of the synagogue; thus the end and the beginning never separate; the circle of eternity has no division. The day on which this spiritual union is performed is hailed as "the joy of the Law," and is enlivened by the pomp of an oriental banquet.

Never have human efforts, mere human efforts, been so marvellously directed to obtain a perpetuity, as have been exemplified in the preservation of their Code; an immaculate

condition was designed to equal the sanctity which it inspired. The verses, the words, and the letters have been counted by the Masorites in a martyrdom of learned and religious diligence. A redundant or a deficient letter, or the space between each distinct letter, not duly preserved, or the quality of the skin on which it is written, or the strings which bind it, would render the scroll corrupt and the scribe infamous. No word must be written by heart, or without having been first orally pronounced by the writer. The caligraphy of the *Sepher Torah*, that is the Book of the Law, is unparalleled for the beauty of its characters; and the Hebrews still testify their veneration for their Code in a manner which might be considered, by any but an Israelite, as partaking largely of the most superstitious idolatry. A silken bandage protects the Roll of the Law from any polluting touch; the transit of a mouse across the holy text, or any

crumbs found in a *Sepher Torah*, require a public act of expiation, and that the polluted roll should be condemned to the flames. The public reader of the Pentateuch holds the holy code, a little unrolled, suspended over the heads of the people, turning it to the four quarters of the universe. Amid their acclamations, they proclaim that this is the law, which God himself delivered to Moses. On its return to the ark, a gorgeous embroidered mantle covers the sacred roll, and the silver bells in its golden diadem are joyfully rung by the honoured Israelite, who on that day has been called to bear it in his arms. The mantled Law scatters a benediction in its passage, though viewed by distant eyes, but happier are those near it, who can kiss the finger which has touched the Holy Code.

It is remarkable, that with all this rabbinical idolatry, with human precautions which

no other ancient manuscript has ever received, the text of the Pentateuch has not been exempt from critical new readings. The labours of Ezra may have been great to recover the inspired text of a code which had been long neglected and forgotten, but Ezra was but a scribe. The Hebrews have testified their devotion to the manuscript; they have counted how often a letter should appear in an uncorrupt copy, that "one hair of that sacred head be not perished;" the verses, and the half verses in every book are reckoned. Yet the integrity of the Masoretic copies has been proved to admit of various readings. The Rabbins boldly asserted, and the Christians implicitly credited, that the inspired text was immaculate. The erudite Buxtorf, in his Tiberias, asserts that in all parts of the world, the word of God is read alike, without any discrepancies whatever: this

is a mortifying instance of credulity, even among the learned, who condescend to echo traditional prejudices, without a critical examination*. Since the days of Buxtorf, Kennicott collated about six hundred manuscripts; and since Kennicott, the learned De Rossi has published four quarto volumes of various readings, from more than four hundred manuscripts. We are assured that this matter is by no means exhausted.

The nature of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures has been a topic of controversy among divines; and in modern Judaic history it has led to a very important distinction, and given rise to two parties, whom it is not, perhaps, possible to reconcile. Is the Pentateuch the law of God, or the law of Moses? The fervent Hebrew, CARDOSO, inculcates the dogma of Judaism—"It is

* Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*, p. 97. Lightfoot describes the labours of the Masorites, i. 999, folio ed.

called the law of Moses," not that he introduced a word, or placed a tittle of his own, for all of it, from the first to the last, was dictated by the Divine Spirit, but is so called to honour the ambassador, or rather the secretary of the Divine Majesty."

Those who have attempted to burst through the enchanted circle where the living are transformed into immovable statues, and to accommodate themselves to the adverse circumstances of the times, by considering the law only as the law of the Hebrew legislator, and therefore susceptible of alteration, have been always forced back into the spell of orthodoxy by the overwhelming majority of the Rabbinical Jews; the excommunicating Pharisees of Jesus. This strikingly occurred on the memorable occasion of the Parisian Sanhedrim, which the empirical genius of Napoleon assembled in our own days. "The law of Moses" became a favourite phrase with

the revolutionary Jews, "men of the age," Ephraimites, compared, as we have seen, to "cakes not turned," half Christian half Jew —anxious to obtain their projected amelioration in the body politic, and to enter into the brotherhood of mankind. An orthodox member sternly rising exclaimed, that he was amazed at the perpetual use of that vague expression; that the appropriate one was "the law of God;" for God, he added, is our legislator!" An innovator replied, "My parents were as orthodox as the last member who has spoken can possibly be, yet I well remember to have heard them always say, *Torah Mosé*, "the law of Moses." The Rabbins, however, entirely sided with the orthodox Hebrew. A mediator rose, observing that the *law of Moses* is always understood to mean the *law of God* transmitted to the Jews by Moses. To reconcile these different opinions, this explanation was ordered to be

inserted in the minutes of the sitting. It is not surprising that the Parisian Sanhedrim was not only a mockery, but a failure of the mocker. Even despotism shrinks into the weakness of infancy, when heaven itself seems to place an impassable barrier to its design; and it encounters minds immutable as the laws which govern them.

The solitary attachment of the Israelites to their sacred code, has perpetuated their immutable faith. As members of a political institution they were to be made entirely different from every other people, and what no other nation had imagined, their governing principle was to be that of a religious republic. They were withdrawn from the rest of their fellow-beings by isolating them amidst a multitude of rites and ceremonies, to occupy their unsteady spirits; these were gorgeous, to indulge them in their sensual tastes for Paganism, without violating the adoration

of the Creator; and the people were hostile to all their neighbours, that they might never be seduced to blend with them. The same miraculous uniformity was produced in their national manners as in the very constitution of their minds.

CHAPTER VI.

A HUMAN SUPERSEDES THE DIVINE CODE.

THE institutes of Moses are not in reality the laws of the Jews. Two human codes have superseded the code delivered from heaven; the one originates in imposture—that of their traditions; and the other is founded on tyranny—that of their customs.

Twelve folios of the Babylonish Talmud, or "the Doctrinal," form this portentous monument in the intellectual history of man. Built up with all the strength and the subtilty, but with all the abuse of the human understanding; founded on the infirmities of our nature, a system of superstitions has immersed the Hebrews in a mass of ritual ordinances,

casuistical glosses, and arbitrary decisions, hardly equalled by their subsequent mimics of the papistry.

The religious Judaism of the Theocracy degenerated into Rabbinical Judaism, by fabulous *traditions* and enslaving *customs*. Dictators of the human intellect, the Rabbins, like their successors, the papal Christians, attempted to raise a spurious Theocracy of their own. A race of dreaming schoolmen contrived to place an avowed collection of mere human decisions among the hallowed verities and the duties of devotion; to graft opinions of men on the scion of divine institution; nay, even to prefer the gloss in direct opposition to the divine precept, whenever, as they express it, "the tradition is *not favoured*," that is, when the oral tradition absolutely contradicts the written law. The Jews live according to their laws, and according to their traditions and their customs; for their

oral traditions have become an integral part of their written law, and their customs have been converted into rites. The Judaic superstitions have been substituted for the Code of Revelation. We may ask by what perverse ingenuity, by what enthralling witchcraft, has such a revolution been brought about?

An artifice, or rather the marvellous imposture of a bold and obscure fiction, one which admitted of no evidence and which allowed of no denial, whose airy nature eluded the grasp while it charmed the eye, was the legend of the Rabbins, by which they assumed that their supplement to the Law of Moses was co-existent with the Law itself. They maintained the existence of "a chain of traditions," which had never been broken from the foundation of Judaism. Whenever they refer to a Talmudical authority, they exultingly exclaim, "This comes from Moses and Mount Sinai!"

Their tale is circumstantial. Moses, after his frequent retirements to the Sacred Mount, on returning to his tent delivered the written law and its interpretation to Aaron; but the interpretation, not being written, became their Oral Law. The sons of Aaron were then called in, and at the feet of the holy mediator received the same instruction from their father. The seventy elders were then admitted, and finally any of the people. Four times was the Oral Law thus repeated, and, for the tale has not yet closed, when the inspired legislator was preparing to withdraw from this life, he invited whoever had forgotten what they had heard from his lips instantly to come to him to refresh their memories. The interval during the last month of the appearance of Moses on earth was occupied in renewing their Oral Law.

As every fable, every tradition, every superstitious custom, set forth by the Rabbinical school, rests on some phrase or single

word in the Scriptures, from whence the most fanciful expositions and the most monstrous inferences may be drawn, it may serve as an instance of their prurient imagination to give the origin on which rests this whole tale. In Exod. xxiv. 12. "The Lord said unto Moses, I will give thee tables of stones, and *a Law* and *Commandments* which I have *written*, that thou mayst teach them." And in Deut. xvi. 32. "Whatsoever thing I command you observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." In these passages they trace the divine origin of their traditions! The first, as to "the *Law* and *Commandments*," seems much like a pleonasm, which, what never pleonasm did, produced twelve volumes in folio; and as for the second, it is a prohibition which forbids the very existence of these twelve folios, by denouncing an addition to, or diminution of, "the Law and Commandments," and which

being declared to be *written*, could not relate to any *oral* traditions. On such airy ground, it will be found that most of the Rabbinical ordinances have been raised.

The Fathers of the Synagogue having once put forth this narrative, the sacred origin of their traditions admitted of no denial; for who dared deny, if he cared not to be scourged, or stoned, or strangled, the Rabbinical punishments of all infidels, that Moses may not have commenced "the chain of tradition?" A legend not more authentic conveyed the keys of St. Peter where they are now to be found, or the consecrated donations of Matilda, or Helena, of which the possessions are more certain than the gifts. In the twelfth century, the illustrious Maimonides asserted the divine authority of the Traditions; an instance of genius participating of the infirmity of its age, or of the partisan spirit closed in its entrenchments

and trembling to concede a single step to its opponent. But five centuries afterwards, the learned Leo de Modena, in his Customs of the Jews, cautiously passes over in silence the mysterious Talmudic origin, content to declare that "this *Lex per os* is a law, agreeing with the Law of Moses, long floating on the lips of the wise, *præcepta sapientium ;*" yet the immutable orthodoxy of the true Rabbinist, in our own times, returns us back to the twelfth century, asserting that the *written* and the *oral* law were "delivered by the great Legislator in the same order he received *both* from God in the Mount*."

This imposture of the divine origin of their traditions found such favour in the eyes of the Hebrews, that to confirm the faith of the sceptic it was carried on with renovated vigour. They have deduced by names, a series of "the receivers of the traditions"—in chro-

* David Levi, *Ceremonies of the Jews*, p. 224.

nological order. Their oral law was perpetuated by Joshua, the judges, the prophets, and descended to the chiefs of the great Synagogue, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others. A new dynasty of "the receivers of the traditions," —for with oriental luxuriance they title their later Rabbins, "the Princes of the captivity," —have their names and reigns recorded in the Jewish annals of their divinity schools. It is not amiss to study human follies, that we may be taught our own weakness. Abraham Zacuta, a Spanish Jew, expelled with his brethren from Spain, to reanimate the drooping spirits of his fellow emigrants, had formed a series of Rabbins from the earliest period he could fix on, and the father of the human race stands in the only place he could, down to the year 1500. Gedaliah continued the authentic series; and had it not been for their artless anachronisms, and their strange confusion of localities, either at

Cordova, or Rome, or Troyes, or Narbonne, or Pundabita, wherever they wandered, we might refer to their historical records with the same confidence as the Jewish Rabbins themselves.

The truth is, that Judaism had found its last asylum in its numerous academies or colleges, which boasted of a race of Mishnaical doctors, residing at different places. A strange and wondrous spectacle was now exhibited to the universe. A conquered nation had changed their military leaders into Rabbins, and their hosts into armies of students; we have accounts of these pale-cheeked squadrons, covered only with the dust of the schools; but where ten and twenty thousand disciples were practising their tactics under some able chieftain of the traditions.

At the close of the second century of the Christian era, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, flourished Rabbi Judah Hakkadosh, or the

Holy, who is said to have been "the fortieth receiver of the traditions from Mount Sinai." The Hebrews must have computed the length of human life by some tradition "not favoured" by the Scripture award of "the days of man." He perceived, amid the ruins of the Jewish government, that the memories of the Mishnaical doctors were fast decaying, a circumstance which assuredly had often happened; feuds and controversies were rising; one man would not submit to another, however solemnly assured by his opponent that what he affirmed, "he had from tradition," which heretofore was a sacred and a conclusive authority.

The Jewish writers, who have a deal of history which no one else knows, and are deplorably ignorant of that with which all other men are acquainted, have ventured to inform us that this Rabbin Judah the Holy, had converted the imperial polytheist to Judaism,

and that it was for this philosopher on the throne that he collected in writing the oral law of his nation. The secret history of this new proselyte of the gate, in the person of the Roman emperor, is not so probable as that the Jewish people, having lost everything of substantial greatness in their own country, were now disposed to care little for what is more easily dispersed and lost, than any other thing on earth—words, sayings, arguments, prescribed rites and customs, and many distinctions without differences.

This Rabbin was unquestionably one of those prescient minds which regulate the genius of a people; "the Holy" saw his adored Judaism in its decrepitude—his hand restored it to what he deemed its pristine purity. Skilful and patient of labour, his zeal collected together the precepts of what is called the *Mishna*, or "the Repetition." It

was a digest of all their "customs" arranged by titles and chapters. The design of this eminent man in this great compilation was simply to preserve the *dicta* of his predecessors or his contemporaries; pure in its style, and admirable for its classification, this digest maintains the highest authority, but the Aristotelian genius of the writer could not advance beyond the aphoristic manner. The *Mishna*, at first considered as the perfection of human skill and industry, at length was discovered to be a vast indigested heap of contradictory decisions. It was a supplement to the law of Moses, which itself required a supplement. Composed in curt unconnected sentences, such as would occur in conversation, designed to be got by rote by the students from the lips of their oracles, the whole was at length declared not to be even intelligible, and served only to perplex or terrify the scrupulous

Hebrew. Such is the nature of "traditions" when they are fairly brought together, and submitted to the eye.

The *Mishna* now only served as a text, the law of Moses being slightly regarded, to call forth interminable expositions. The very sons of the founder of the *Mishna* set the first example, by pretending that they understood what their father meant. The work once begun, it was found difficult to get rid of the workmen. The sons of "the Holy" were succeeded by a long line of other rulers of their divinity schools, under the title, aptly descriptive, of the *Amoraim* or *Dictators!* These were the founders of the new despotism; afterwards wanderers in the labyrinth they had themselves constructed, roved the *Seburaim*, or *Opinionists*, no longer dictating, but inferring opinions by keen disputations. As in the decline of empire mere florid titles delight,

rose the *Geonim*, or *sublime Doctors;* till at length, in the dissolution of this dynasty of theologians, they sunk into the familiar titular honour of *Rabbi* or Master!

The Jews had incurred the solemn reproach in the days of Jesus, of having annihilated the word of God by the load of their *Traditions.* The calamity became more fearful when two centuries after they received the fatal gift of their collected traditions called *Mishna*, and still more fatal, when in the lapse of the three subsequent centuries, the epoch of the final compilation, was produced the commentary graced with the title of the *Gemara*, Completeness, or Perfection! It was imagined that the human intellect had here touched its meridian. The national mind was completely Rabbinised. It became uniform, stable, and "peculiar." The Talmud, or the Doctrinal, as the whole is called, was the labour of nearly five hundred years.

Here, then, we find a prodigious mass of contradictory opinions, an infinite number of casuistical cases, a logic of scholastic theology, some recondite wisdom, and much rambling dotage; many puerile tales and oriental fancies; ethics and sophisms, reasonings and unreasonings, subtle solutions, and maxims and riddles; nothing in human life seems to have happened which these doctors have not perplexed or provided against, for their observations are as minute as Swift exhausted in his "Directions to Servants." The children of Israel, always children, were delighted as their Talmud increased its volume and their hardships. The Gemara was a third law to elucidate the Mishna, which was a second law, and which had thrown the first law, the law of Moses, into obscurity.

The sole education of the Jewish youth is restricted to their law and to their tri-

bunal. It was early inculcated among the Jews to despise all profane studies, and the candid Leo de Modena acknowledges, that these are held by them to be "dangerous and pernicious." Learning and science, according to the Rabbinical notion, should only be used "as a servant is employed by a master." This contempt in which they hold works not composed in "the Holy Language" may be detected in the Hebrew Josephus, who, in writing his history in Greek, which was the effort of a politician, has betrayed his national pride by a remarkable Jewish confession. Born in the aristocratic tribe, the lofty Levite in closing his history, condescends to inform the idolaters, that he does not regret the time it has cost him in learning the Greek language, although his Jewish accent could not obtain its perfect pronunciation. "The truth is, we esteem not those who learn different

languages. Such profane studies are better adapted for *Slaves* than for *Freemen*. And we consider no one to be truly enlightened who has not acquired that deep knowledge of our law and our holy writings as to be capable of explaining them." Such is the scornful acknowledgment of Josephus, and, seventeen centuries after, Cardoso, a learned physician, confirms the barbarous exclusiveness. "Our Law is our Science and our Understanding, and truly Israel cares not for human sciences, for uncertain philosophy, empirical medicine, dreaming chemistry. Israel cares not to learn the histories of other nations, nor the chronology of civil events, nor the politics of princes*." This holy ignorance of geography and chronology in the Rabbinical histories has proved to be very instructive, since it enables us to detect

* Cardoso, *Excellencias de los Hebreos*, p. 135.

their fabulous narratives and their imaginary personages. Their barbarous disdain of all foreign learning, the characteristic of some semi-civilised races, was long the haughty distinction of the Synagogue. Origen, in replying to the polytheist Celsus, acknowledges, that the Jews would never learn the Greek language, and much less care for the dogmas of their philosophers.

It may still afford some curiosity to learn the means by which this wondrous domination over the genius of a whole people has been effectuated, and fixed on them a voluntary bondage; a bondage which the impatient St. Peter, who was not unwilling to compromise for many Levitical customs, could no longer endure, while the apostle exclaims, that it was "a yoke upon our necks, which our fathers, nor we, are able to bear."

The artifice practised by Rabbinical Judaism, which finally terminated in the Tal-

mudical edicts, was to treat the Sacred Code as prodigal of mystic secrets, hidden in a phrase or hanging on a single word, possibly on a particular letter, to be applied in a sense literal, or symbolical, or anagogical. Hence they tell us "There is not even a *letter* in the law on which huge *mountains* are not suspended." These are the Alps on Alps of the Talmud! We are astonished to discover how, from a single expression in the Scriptures, either obscure, or metaphorical, or literal, the most extravagant conclusions are deduced by the oriental imaginations of the Rabbins. The origin of ludicrous customs or the vilest superstitions, nay even the illustration of some silly tale, they insist, lies under the rind of a casual phrase or a particular word, or rather all hang on the theological cobwebs of the Rabbinical school*.

* The words of a true Rabbinist are, "*No hay en la*

St. Paul exulted that he was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel." A Rabbinical exhortation to their humiliated students, illustrates the style of the apostle; they are told "to roll themselves in the dust of the feet of the Rabbins," who sate high in their professorial chairs. The first Universities or Colleges of the Hebrews, after their dispersion, are beautifully described by the more ancient Rabbins, where the students in their ranks "sate in order planted as in a vineyard." These Colleges degenerated into their *Yesibots* or Schools, which the zealous Cardoso calls *Santuarios pequenos.* Their "little sanctuaries," in the history of human knowledge, are nurseries for children, who are never to be men. There the human mind, cast into one mould, can only repeat the identi-

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Ley ni aun una letra de la qual no esten colgados grandes montes."—Cardoso, *Excellencias de los Hebreos*, p. 135.

cal form at the ten thousandth impression, whatever may be the quality of the metal. View the delirious wanderer among "their mountains" of the Talmud—a single word of the Mosaic text explodes into a commentary—an opponent starts up, balancing texts against texts: they ejaculate, they gesticulate, eager to contradict, and mutual dilemmas entrap the wranglers. A long intricate argument scares the respondent. Authority is called for—authorities were ready, ere the conflict began, for no opinion must be advanced without a reference to some authority—so that nothing is said but what has been formerly said. An opinion ventured on without an authority is a heresy, and incurs the damnatory sentence of "strangulation."

When confusion is worse confounded, and when great difficulties arise and they can find no issue, dotage on one side, and subter-

fuge on the other, some human cistern in which are deposited all the waters of Talmudical lore, an ancient Rabbin drops out the saying of some far more ancient Rabbin, or alleges some tradition; the school re-echoes a shout of triumph for the wisdom which for ever silences two disputants who could never reply to one another. The whole process of these scholastic contests—which, it is said, on every Sabbath when they are practised, give a supernumerary soul to the Israelite—somewhat resembles an amicable suit in Chancery; in their oriental style, it is said to be "making a Hedge for the Law." These mock logomachies tend to sharpen the faculties of these students; but their minds are tethered, and they are inevitably confined to their hereditary ignorance.

These assemblies of disputatious Talmudists, however, are sometimes amusing; and it is considered that many of the ridiculous, as

well as a few ingenious tales in the Gemara, were introduced by Rabbins to rouse the scholars when their ears were closed with their eyes.* Even in the days of Leo de Modena, that philosophical Jew complained that the pride of disputation was the sole object of the modern Rabbinical schools, who, huddled together in their brawlings, were more eager to quote than to confute.

Such were the arts by which the Rabbins walled in the human intellect; the system kept the national genius stationary and unchangeable. Liberty of thinking, the only good thing in this world—as the ardent father Paul, Sarpi exclaimed, in his noble contest with the Church of Rome—was utterly abrogated. But all attempts, by any machinery of man's invention, to force an uniformity of opinions, and a conformity in indifferent matters, have never stifled the latent divinity within him of a better temper; the still

small voice of truth and conscience, what artifice of man has silenced—its cries have been heard even in Spain and Italy. Did no Israelite of a better nature than the Rabbinical Pharisee mourn over the heavy calamity which clouded his people? Did no critical eye detect how their "chain of tradition," which they still drag so heavily, had been battered and forged, and had imposed on the human intellect an usurped dominion, a despotic rule; and, under the hallowed veil of religion, concealed the most vulgar superstition? The dignity of human nature, even among the Jews, was not so wholly violated.

The Rabbins could not conceal from the world that a schism had broken out, between the orthodox Hillel and his master, the innovator, Schammai; the Plato and the Aristotle of the Rabbinical schools. Hillel, one of the great Mishnaic doctors, ranks among the chief masters of the traditions. His history

is that of a man of genius. He lived by his manual labour in extreme poverty, but passing frequently by the school of Schammai he caught the fever of knowledge, and divided his small gains of the day with the porter of the academy, as a bribe for admission. But work failed him, and the porter was obdurate. One Friday Hillel, in despair, climbed at the window to listen to the master, and there remaining far into the night absorbed in meditation, he was found in the morning of the Sabbath, buried and nearly perished in snow. Schammai, affected by this passion for study, opined that such a man merited to be restored to life, and that even the Sabbath might be violated by kindling a fire to chafe the frozen Hebrew. This fact indicates the bold character of Schammai, who was no advocate for making laws incompatible with daily use obligatory. It is probable that Hillel was mortified to have been restored to life on the Sab-

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bath, for his orthodoxy soon flamed when admitted among the disciples of his benevolent master.

The rational Schammai protested against the indispensable sway of the traditions, and sometimes impugned their authority; the orthodox Hillel, who now declared himself to be one of the depositories of the law, turned away with horror from the daring Reformer, and would not abate a tittle of the traditions. The schism was declared. The disciples of these great Rabbins held disputations for three years, like the Nominalists and the Realists of the scholastic æra; and, like their successors too, they adopted the weakest of all arguments for a minority, the *argumentum baculinum*. The glory of "the little sanctuaries" of Judaic theology was clouded over to their mutual shame. At length it was resolved to hold a solemn synod, wherein, as usual, the truth would

be irrevocably fixed. The question turned on which had best preserved the law and the traditions, and it was decided by a single voice; but that voice was not terrestrial. Suddenly amidst the disputants, the mysterious *Bath Kol*, or "the daughter of the voice," was distinctly heard declaring that "both were the words of the living God, but the decision is according to the school of Hillel." The cunning compromising oracle would not endanger the commonwealth of superstition by supposing that an heretical Rabbin, could possibly exist. It is evident that the traditionists have written their own history, but they could not entirely conceal from us that there were anti-traditionists.

Two centuries had hardly elapsed after the completion of the Talmud, when the sect of the Caraites declared for the written law of Moses, and abolished the traditions as human inventions and human abuses. They derived their name from the word *Cara*,

which in the Babylonian dialect signified the Scriptural. The Scripturists opposed the Talmudists: the most rational Jews would of course constitute a very small minority. Dr. Clarke found them in the East, and some in Poland, but no such community appears in the most enlightened quarter of the globe. These Jewish Protestants are supposed not to exceed three or four thousand, and they are ever blackened by the orthodox with all the *odium theologicum*. Condemned as heretics, their offspring are decreed to be *Mamzerim*, or bastards, and any intermarriage with the Talmudists would be annulled. Wherever a Caraite prefers the distant interests of his family to his own simple creed, by degenerating into a Rabbinist, it is further required that two generations shall pass away ere the taint of sense and piety can sufficiently be purified, to mingle with the blood of daughters of Talmudic dreamers.

The subject of TRADITION in the history of religion has been a fertile topic of debate. We may leave to the French Daillé and to the English Whitby and Chillingworth the glory of the contest*. The Hebrew and the Romanist rest much of their doctrines, authorise many of their customs, and deduce

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* Daillé was among the early French Protestants, and in his able Treatise on "The Right Use of the Fathers," attacked their authority in the controversy between Romanists and Protestants. He reduces "Les Saints Pères" to very fallible men; which was shaking the whole system of traditions in the Church of Rome. Perhaps the keenest of his answerers is Thomas White, the adversary of Hobbes, appended to his "Apology for Rushworth's Dialogues," which involved the subject of traditions. The title betrays our Catholic advocate's spirit; "Daillé's Arts discovered, or his Right Use proved a Downright Abuse of the Fathers." The learned Whitby defended Daillé, in his Treatise on "Traditions," where the subject is considerably developed. In Chillingworth's works, as well as in Tillotson's, and other Protestant divines, it is frequently investigated.

some mysteries of their creed, on so suspicious an origin as that of Tradition.

To divest all Tradition of authority would be depriving human life of a necessary instrument of knowledge and of practice. This, it has been observed, would be setting up ourselves for the first of our race; and to refuse all commerce with our forefathers would reduce us to a very inexperienced state. In the arts there are many secrets which have been transmitted to us solely by Tradition; and in Egypt, to this day, many practices are traditionally handed down, which, were many such collected, Napoleon observed, might lead to the recovery of some of the lost arts of antiquity. Without the aid of Tradition, say the Rabbins, we should not have been able to have known which was the first month of the year, and which the seventh day of the week. A Caraite, rejecting Traditions, tauntingly interrogated

Hillel, the greatest of the Rabbins, on what evidence they rested? The sage, pausing for a moment, desired the sceptic would repeat the three first letters of the alphabet. This done, that advocate for Traditions in his turn asked, "How do you know how to pronounce these letters in this way, and no other?" "I learnt them from my father," replied the Caraite: "And your son shall learn them from you," rejoined Hillel; "and this is Tradition!"

Nor will the historian refuse to receive Tradition as the secret witness of Time. Tradition bestows the life of memory on the forgotten. Tradition consigns to us unwritten records of the human race. Tradition casts a light in the deep night of the world; but in remote ages, it is like the pale and uncertain moonlight, which may deceive us by flitting shadows, rather than indeed show the palpable forms of truth.

It cannot be denied that oral traditions have been preserved for many ages. The Druids, the Scandinavian Scalds, the Scottish and the Irish bards or harpers, like the rhapsodists of Greece and the poets of Arabia, deposited in their memories many thousand verses. The methodical discipline of a young Druid would occupy twenty years*; and the votaries of the Celtic school still imagine that they possess some of these sixty thousand verses, the result of all kinds of knowledge, which they trusted to the ear of their successors. The common law of England was long an unwritten law; and Fortescue ardently insists that some of our national customs are as old as the primitive Britons. Such fragments of knowledge as poetry may contain, or customs inherited by a race of men, it is not difficult to conceive

* Cæsar, Comment. lib. vi. c. 13.

may have been perpetuated through a long succession of ages. Yet that a voluminous unwritten work, though a poem, could descend entire through a thousand years may startle our belief; and Homer himself, as an individual, and the Iliad as a complete poem, when derived from an age in which all knowledge was oral, cannot escape from the taunt of a suspicious origin.

It is in the nature of Traditions that they are always increasing, and the older the Tradition, at every remove of time, the weaker is its evidence. We know when a tale is told for the twentieth time, how little it may resemble the first; like copies taken after copies, like rumours and reports, we find one has omitted what the other has added, and which a third would vainly rectify; as recollection becomes fainter, the receiver of Traditions supplies by imperfect suggestions, or misconceives by his own

inadvertency, or bends and shapes to serve a party purpose, for Tradition is a favourable vehicle for human passions. What in its origin sprung from the slightest grounds, through a succession of interested repetitions, becomes an established authority; and what at first was not deemed probable, in length of time is received as undoubted. There is this remarkable in the history of man. Under the influence of imagination and passion, fictions in a series of time acquire the consistency of truths, while truths, attenuating in their descent to us, are liable to be corrupted into falsehoods. Our admirable poet, old Spenser, seems to have accounted for this unhappiness in our fate, for he has said, "that there is not any certain hold to be taken of any antiquity which is received by *Tradition*, since all men be liars, and many lye when they will*."

* Spenser's View of Ireland.

An error repeated, may in the course of time become *a Tradition.* In the history of Tradition, since the whole mass of doctrines and dogmas, and customs, and legendary histories, variable and contradictory, mysterious and mystical, lie together in a state of corruption, the period has long arrived, when the genuine are not less susceptible of being contested than the doubtful and the spurious.

An enormous body of TRADITIONS has been imposed on the Hebrew, the Romanist, and their arrogant imitator the Mahometan, incumbering the faith and fettering the faculties of their followers in this dominion of delusion. The history of the *Sonnah* of the Mahometans, like that of the *Traditions* of the Romanists, is likewise that of the *Talmud* of the Jews; the true mother of these children. After the death of Mahomet, and at the awful interval of two

centuries, a sage of the Koran selected 7275 genuine Traditions from 100,000 doubtful, and 200,000 spurious. Few things have generated faster than *Traditions*, when they had proper fathers.

Mankind are gross copyists. Nature, narrowed in her revolving circle, affords so little novelty to the audacious temerity of the disturbers of men's consciences, that they have always fallen into the old footsteps. The contradictor of the Talmudists, say the orthodox Rabbins, should suffer a punishment indicative of a Rabbin's delicacy and his mercy, that of being stifled in boiling dung; and an orthodox Mufti excommunicates with the same hearty malediction, for the Sonnaist declares, that he who employs his time in disputation, should be fixed on a stake, and carried about with this proclamation: "This is the reward of him, who, leaving the *Koran* and the *Sonna*, applied

himself to the study of Scholastic Divinity*." To attack Traditions, it was urged against the learned Launoy, is to attack religion; because Launoy refused to subscribe to *a new doctrine* from an *old Tradition* of the Jesuits, and continued to depopulate their polytheistical paradise of saint after saint, in detecting the ignorance of the middle ages, and the fabulous traditions of his own.

* Sale's Preliminary Discourse to the Koran, p. 202.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST GREAT CAUSE OF THE SEPARATION OF THE HEBREWS.—THEIR WRITTEN LAW RECEIVED AS OF DIVINE INSTITUTION.

SUBDUED yet unvanquished, scattered yet not lost, the dispersion of a people without their dissolution is a phenomenon in the annals of mankind; no human power has broken the solitary unity of this ancient people.

This phenomenon in the annals of mankind has baffled the curiosity of even men of philosophical minds, who have sometimes assigned causes quite inadequate to their effects, or have endeavoured to cut the Gordian knot by some fanciful theory. Spurzheim, speculating on the influence of climate upon the organisation, concludes that man, by his

intellectual faculties, opposes its influence. He illustrates his position by appealing to the Jewish people, who, dispersed over the whole world, preserve their primitive and characteristic organisation in all countries. The effect, he says, of innateness and propagation from parents to children, being much stronger than that of external influence.

Whether the Hebrews, natives of all climates, bear through their successive generations a peculiar organisation from any other race, we leave to the researches of the anatomists, or, if they please, the phrenologists. As a moral historian I must assign other causes why the Jew has preserved, in all climates, his "primitive characteristic."

This curious point of investigation has often perplexed the most speculative philosophers. Toland frequently intimates, in his learned paradoxical writings, a favourite scheme of uniting the Jew and the Chris-

tian, by convincing them that they professed the same faith. According to his view, he discovers that the earliest followers of Christ consisted both of Jews and Gentiles; the Jewish Christians held that the ancient law, the law of heaven, was an ordinance for perpetuity, "everlasting;" and consequently they were bound by the Levitical rites; but the Gentiles were not subjected to the Mosaic code, which was expressly designed for "the peculiar people." Toland would thus have inferred, that a Jew might still remain such as he is, and, notwithstanding, unite with the Christian, as he would then stand in the position of those primitive Judaising Christians. The ancient law, Toland insists, was never abrogated by the Christian dispensation, as is vulgarly supposed. Where is this abrogation to be found? The great advent of Jesus, as Jesus himself announced, was "not to destroy, but to fulfil" the

law. But the Christian understands the term "eternity" in various passages of scripture, as limited to the existence of the Jewish church; the literal Jew rejects an eternity limited to time or place. Considering Jesus, as Jesus appeared on the earth, in his human nature, none but a rabbinical Pharisee would refuse accepting the founder of the Christian religion, a Jew like themselves, as a mighty reformer of his nation, one who wrestled with the tyranny and the superstitions of "the traditionists," a being excellent as Moses, and who perished for his holiness. In this view of a Jewish Christianity, Toland was probably a Socinian; and the author of "Christianity not mysterious," who found nothing in the Gospel contrary to reason, nor above it, has either eluded the mystery of the divinity of Jesus, or should have informed us whether the divinity of Jesus entered into the creed of these Judaising Christians?

At this period of his learned reveries, he was startled by the object of our present inquiry. He could not account by any human means for the permanent spectacle of the universal dispersion of the Jewish nation, always preserving themselves as a distinct people. He actually published what he calls "A Problem concerning the Jewish nation and religion," soliciting the learned and ingenious to resolve it for him, before he published a work, which, with many others, he appears only to have had in his head, on the "Respublica Mosaica," which, he says "He admires infinitely above all forms of government that ever yet existed."

I give that part of "The Problem" which states our difficulties. "Can it be demonstrated by the intrinsic constitution or religion of the Jews, how, after the total subversion of their state for almost seventeen hundred years, and after the dispersion of

their nation over the whole habitable earth, being neither favoured nor supported by any potentate, but rather exposed to the contempt and hatred of all the world, they have nevertheless preserved themselves a distinct people with all their ancient rites? while in the meantime the institutions of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans, nations that were much more powerful, are long ago entirely abolished?"

This is indeed a mighty inquiry; perhaps a mystery; it is held even to be a miracle; but there are miracles which have been operated by those secondary causes which govern human events from age to age, and if our ordinary sagacity discovers these, we only confirm the miracle. The miraculous operation is not the less for having been produced by the ordinary results of human actions. The luminous mind of the author of "The Analogy of Religion," has removed

the apparent difficulty of the inquiry; for he observes that "when things come to pass according to the course of nature, this does not hinder them from being his doing, who is the God of Nature."

I would ascribe to four great causes the separation of the Israelites from all the generations of mankind.

I. The written law of Moses, received as of divine institution.

II. The Institution of the Sabbath.

III. The multitude and the minuteness of their rites in their ceremonial law.

IV. The prohibition of certain aliments.

When the Lord decreed that the intellect of his Israelites should be uniform, stable, and peculiar, the Eternal secured their very thoughts from a prostration before "the Idols of the mind," as Bacon has finely described the vacillations of fanciful men, the feuds of sectarian opinions, and those *delirimenta*

doctrinæ which have hitherto distracted the race of Adam. To obey God, was the greatest virtue of this people; and the fundamental principle of this government was the obedience which children must yield to their parent.

The people were told of the perfection of their law. "This is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations which shall hear all these statutes, and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people*." The restriction of the education of the Jewish people to their divine law, unquestionably preserved them during their national independence as a great and religious community. That political result was realised which has so often baffled the force of human governments to establish

* Deut. iv. 6.

—universal conformity. There could be no non-conformity in the land of Israel; any opposition to the code of the Theocracy from a protester or a dissenter would have involved them in an overt act of treason, since *their religion was their law*; and the citizen who violated the civil precepts of the Mosaic code necessarily incurred the pains of the blasphemer, since *their law was their religion*.

The influence of a constitution, received from the hand of heaven itself, over the national character, made the Israelites different from every other nation. There was an obdurate resistance in their national character which refused to amalgamate with that of their neighbours. The principle of a religious commonwealth displays its lasting operations throughout the unexampled government of the Hebrews. "The world was created

for Man TO WORSHIP," is the vital principle of Judaism*. Every day is portioned out for repeated orisons, and is hallowed by a multiplicity of religious acts; the exterior forms of devotion are daily habits, and mingle even with their avocations—in the street or the market—and morning and evening must they alike confess the unity of God.

The Mosaic dispensation appears to have been granted for the use of the Israelites during the Theocracy. The divine code was designed to make an inconsiderable people a great nation, and long it conducted the Children of Israel during their political tutelage. But the eternal principles of their religious

* *Thesoro dos Dinim que a povo de Israel he obrigado a saber e observar*, p. 1. These curious observances were collected by Manasseh ben Israel, the learned and eminent person who negociated with Cromwell a settlement here for the Jews.

government could never be extinct in the Jewish constitution. The memory of the Theocracy could never depart from this ancient people, and never have they ceased to renew the claim to their pristine glory. Such has been the awful source of an enthusiasm experienced by no other generation of men.

The patriotism, that is, the religion, of the Jewish people, when the iron had not yet rusted in their hands, vouched their national faith by heroic acts, not eclipsed by those romantic people the Greeks and the Romans. No people but the subjects of a Theocracy could have invariably rejected conditional terms with their enemies—but their enemies they beheld as the enemies of their God. What other people like these have combated in the field—have rushed, in their last despair, on suicidal immolations; and have

bowed their heads in the silence of martyrdom for their religion, their laws, their customs, their creed?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SECOND GREAT CAUSE OF THE SEPARATION OF THE HEBREWS FROM EVERY OTHER PEOPLE, IS THE SABBATIC INSTITUTION.

An entire cessation from all the affairs of life on each seventh day is a Jewish institution, and is not prescribed by the laws of any other people. The minutest violation of its rigid observance, incurred the sentence of death. A man gathering faggots in a wood was condemned to the punishment of lapidation, a punishment reserved only for the blasphemous, who, in mockery of the God of Israel, dared to pronounce the ineffable name. At a lower period of the Israelitish history, Isaiah, in his sublime style, impressed its extreme rigidity; "If thou

restrain thy foot on the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on the holy day, and shalt call the sabbath a delight, and the holy feast of Jehovah honourable, and shalt honour it by refraining from thy purpose, from pursuing thy pleasure, and from speaking vain words—then shalt thou delight thyself in Jehovah." So inviolable was held the sanctity of this day, that its uninterrupted course was preferred to the preservation of life itself, of which history has recorded some instances of the most solemn nature, and some whose result has been not a little ludicrous.

The reason of this peculiar institution has been often inquired into. Moses, in describing the Creator as *resting* from the labours of creation on *the Sabbath day*, and ordaining the strictest ceremonies of the Sabbath as a memorial of the divine repose, only accommodated figurative expressions to the sensual comprehension of his tribes—an

intellectual Omnipotence, whose workmanship is not the work of hands, could not be comprehended by their gross conceptions.

The great legislator of the Hebrews had, also, assigned another reason for the Sabbatic institution, for he told the Israelites that the Sabbath commemorated their deliverance from Egypt. At a late period of their history, the Jewish apologists of their people, when they were contemned and aspersed for its observance by the Greeks and the Romans, assigned different motives for the Sabbatical institution. Philo, after some platonic fancies of the mystical number seven, for its quietness, floridly describes the seventh day as "the universal festival of nature," which ought not to be peculiar to any people; but Josephus informs us, that the Sabbath of the Jew was instituted for the purpose of securing a regular application to the study of their law.

To the ancient Polytheists, nothing seemed so joyless as the austerity of a Jewish Sabbath. It was a strange abandonment of all the avocations of life. They saw the fields of the Hebrew forsaken by the labourer; the ass unsaddled; the oar laid by in the boat; they marked a dead stillness pervading the habitation of the Israelite; the fire extinguished, the meat unprepared, the man servant and the maiden leave their work, and the trafficker, at least one day of the week, refusing the offered coin. When the Hebrews had armies of their own, they would halt in the midst of victory on the eve of the Sabbath, and on the Sabbath day ceased even to defend their walls from the incursions of an enemy.

Sabbatarians became a term of reproach for the Jews with the Polytheists, who never could conceive the design of the Sabbath from its singular observances. The blunders of Plutarch are ludicrous; Tacitus and

Juvenal imagined that the custom was a mere indulgence of national indolence. Sometimes they mistook the solemn Sabbath for a penitential fast, as did Augustus when, writing to Tiberius, alluding to his own abstinence, he said, that "no Jew kept so strict a fast on the Sabbath, as he did upon that day." The epigrammatic Martial alludes to the windy sourness of the empty stomachs of fasting Sabbatarians. The primitive Christians abhorred the observances of the Jewish Sabbath, which they considered as only practised by the contemners of "the Lord's day." Justin Martyr tells Tripho the Jew in the full spirit of the times, that "they would gladly endure the most horrible tortures that men and devils could devise to inflict on them, rather than keep *your Sabbath.*"

The interior delights of the habitation of the Hebrew were alike invisible to the Polytheist and the Christian fathers. They

heard not the domestic greetings which cheerfully announced "the good Sabbath," nor the paternal benediction for the sons, nor the blessing of the master for his pupils. They could not behold the mistress of the house watching the sunset, and then lighting the seven wicks of the lamps of the Sabbath, suspended during its consecration; for oil to fill the Sabbath-lamp, the mendicant implored an alms. But the more secret illumination of the law on the Sabbath, as the Rabbins expressed it, bestowed a supernumerary soul on every Israelite. The sanctity felt through the Jewish abode on that day, was an unfailing renewal of the religious emotions of this pious race. Thus in the busy circle of life was there one unmoveable point where the weary rested, and the wealthy enjoyed a heavenly repose. It was not without some truth that Leo of Modena, a philosophical Hebrew, called this day, "the festival of the Sabbath."

It is beautiful to trace the expansion of an original and vast idea in the mind of a rare character who seems born to govern the human race. Such an awful and severe genius was the legislator of the Hebrews. The Sabbatical institution he boldly extended to a seventh year, equally as he had appointed a seventh day. At that periodical return the earth was suffered to lie fallow and at rest. In this "Sabbath of the land," the Hebrews were not permitted to plant, to sow, or to reap; and of the spontaneous growth no proprietor at those seasons was allowed to gather more than sufficed for the bare maintenance of his household. There was also release of debtors. The sublime genius of Moses looked far into futurity when, extending this great moral influence, he planned the still greater Sabbatical institution for every fifty years. Seven Sabbaths of years closed in the Jubilee, or the great year of release.

Then at the blowing of the horn in the synagogue the poor man ceased to want; the slave was freed; all pledges were returned; and all lands reverted to their original proprietors. To prevent an excessive accumulation of wealth, the increase of unlimited debts, and the perpetuity of slavery, this creator of a political institution like no other, decreed that nothing should be perpetual but the religious republic itself.

But it has been the fate of Israel to witness her inspired ordinances polluted by the inventions and the artifices of men. What was sacred they have made ridiculous. The most scrupulous superstitions had long been superadded to the observance of the Sabbath, and practised by the Rabbinical Pharisees in the days of Jesus. The female was not allowed to observe herself in a mirror lest she might be tempted to pluck a hair; the Israelite might not even scrape the dirt off his shoes; he

must not lift a weight, nor touch money, nor ride, nor bathe, nor play on an instrument; the most trivial act of domestic life connected with labour or business was a violation of the Sabbath. Even the distance of a Sabbath-walk was not to exceed that space which lies between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives; this was the distance between the Temple and the Tabernacle; it had been nicely measured, and the Hebrew in Rome on his Sabbath was still counting the steps of a Sabbath-day's journey.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THIRD GREAT CAUSE WHICH SEPARATED THE JEWISH PEOPLE FROM THEIR NEIGHBOURS, WAS THE MULTITUDE OF THEIR RITES AND THEIR CEREMONIAL LAW.

THE pious and the enlightened SPENCER, in his great work on the Hebrew laws, profound, extensive, and original in research, has arranged in opposite columns the contending opinions respecting the origin of the remarkable custom of *circumcision*, and having furnished whatever his reading and his meditation could afford, he has declined delivering any opinion himself, as he expresses it, *in re tam sacra et perplexa* *.

The subject is sacred, since we are informed

* Spencer de Leg. Heb., lib. ii. sect. iv.

by scripture that circumcision as a *rite* was instituted by the divine command to Abram; "my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant;" and it is perplexed, because the *custom* of circumcision has been discovered to have existed among the Egyptians, and to have been practised among other nations. The physician Celsus, in reproaching the Jews for attaching a religious ceremony to its observance, adds that they have it only in common with many other people.

The Jewish rite long excited, among theological inquirers, too severe a controversy. It was imagined that to ascribe a Jewish rite to an Egyptian custom, or to suppose that it was derived from any people whatever, was a covert attack on the authenticity of the Mosaic revelation; it was therefore assumed that the Egyptians must have borrowed the custom from the patriarchs, for that the rite is of divine institution.

TINDAL, the author of "Christianity as old as the Creation," asserted, as the Emperor Julian had already done, that "this institution was originally an Egyptian custom;" and Tindal therefore inferred that Abraham had only adopted the practice to render his posterity more agreeable to the Egyptians. MARSHAM, and other profound researchers into remote antiquity, have also been struck by the similarity of the Jewish with the Egyptian customs. The golden calf in the wilderness, SELDEN discovered to have been an Egyptian worship. We shall shortly ourselves discover a very remarkable one still daily practised. LE CLERC, in his "Commentary on Genesis," on the present subject of circumcision, is paralysed by indecision, and in his despair appeals to the sage SPENCER, who, we have shown, preserves a mournful silence. SHUCKFORD, in his "Sacred and Profane History," has recourse to

a passage of the suspicious Sanchoniathon, who has ascribed the origin of circumcision to *Ilus*, whom SHUCKFORD, in his poetical discoveries on the most abstruse incidents of theological curiosity, demonstrates to be Abraham himself; a conclusion which would at once close the dispute.

It was too long considered as derogatory to the character of the inspired legislator to imagine that Moses should have adopted rites and customs from the Heathens; and it was insinuated that this opinion could only have been designed for a covert attack on his divine mission. The learned SPENCER, however, has collected a multiplicity of facts of this kind, in his great work, and since his labours others remain to be added. Yet this erudite divine, whose piety no one arraigns, has incurred censure for his luminous discoveries.

It was not in the natural course of events

that the greater nation should have adopted the rites and the customs of the lesser; or that a hierarchy should borrow those of a sect, a fugitive race to whom they had granted an asylum, converted into slaves, and pursued as enemies. Of the truth of the discoveries of SPENCER, and others who have followed in the same track, we have recently a reluctant avowal from a cotemporary, who, however, has always in reserve some recondite fancy to substitute for positive facts. I shall transcribe the passage. "Instead of supposing that the Pagans borrowed from the Israelites, it has been supposed that the Israelites borrowed from the Pagans. Nor has this opinion been advanced *merely by infidels*, as at first glance might be shrewdly suspected; no less names than those of SPENCER and WARBURTON stand pledged to advocate it. *The resemblance in question is indeed too palpable to be*

denied, but its true origin I believe to have been this, that Judaism and Paganism sprung from a common source." That source the learned, but too theoretical writer, ascribes to the patriarchal revelation, so long anterior to the Mosaic*.

But circumcision, considered merely as a national custom, seems of itself not to be less mysterious than the divine institution of the rite. The introduction of a practice marked by this strange violence of nature among a whole people, must first have been repugnant to their feelings. The occasion, or the reason which led to it, has been so entirely lost in the records of mankind, that the most ancient writers can only allege the most fanciful and contradictory conjectures. The origin of the circumcision, like that of the slaughter of animals in sacrifice to

* Faber on the origin of the Pagan Idolatry, ii. 105.

the Creator, when the blood flowed in torrents around the altar, must remain among those inexplicable incidents which indicate other modes of feeling, and another state of society than we are acquainted with. Scholars, in the pride of erudition, discuss too confidently events which happened before the fable of Troy. The learned on these occasions think by systems, which depend on the assumption of arbitrary statements, often at variance, and always doubtful. One party conceives, that the most ancient nations drew their religion and their mysteries from the Jews, and that the instructors of Egypt were Abraham and Joseph. In the deities of Egypt they view only the disguised personages of the Mosaic history; Osiris is converted into the Adam, the Abraham and the Moses of the Scripture; Moses himself, whom Huet, indeed, discovers to be Bacchus, is, by

another sage in Egyptic lore, made out to be their Typhon, or the Satan to whose machinations the Egyptians ascribed all the evils which happened to them. Basnage adopts the probable system, that the Egyptians had a distinct theology of their own, and that their ancient superstitions were not abolished by their intercourse with the Israelites. The indiscriminate number of their *sacred animals,* and their strange worship of Apis, indicates an extraordinary religion, which enters neither into Judaism nor Christianity.

If we cannot deny that circumcision was a custom among the Egyptians, we must assert that with the Jews it became a divine ordinance, commanded under the pain of death. In the Patriarchal dispensation it was a *religious sign* of God to man: under the Mosaic, when it had fallen into desuetude, it was revived to distinguish the He-

brew from their uncircumcised neighbours, and thus became also a *political sign ; signum politicum* is the happy expression of the erudite Spencer. It was a *seal of blood,* by which all foreigners pledged their fealty to the Hebrew Republic.

This wonderful combination of a religious and political sign was productive of the most important results. "The everlasting covenant" is sealed on the body of every Israelitish child ; thus every man of the race enters into Judaism without the interposition of his own choice. If, like the anabaptists, this baptism, a baptism of blood, had been left for his manhood, he might have been capricious or reluctant. The Jewish apostate is haunted, or betrayed by the indelible testimony, while the loyal Israelite who bears the sign proudly calls himself "A son of the covenant." The stranger who would enter into the Jewish community would not come to

receive this painful and perilous mark without the utmost resolvedness of mind. It was a sign from which he never could be freed, and which would ever make him the scorn of his own people should the vacillator ever return to them. No renegados were ever found in the Jewish nation, observes Spencer. The severity of the initiation into Judaism banished all levity of feeling and infirmity of purpose.

The practice of circumcision, consecrated by the Jewish religion, had something mystically expressive of purity; for in the figurative style of the apostles, who then were disposed to get rid of the sacred sign altogether, allusion is made to "the circumcision of the heart;" and the interior holiness of the mind they described as "the circumcision, which is not made by hands."

Thus a rite apparently trivial, and to a mother barbarous, in the prescience of the

divine legislator was designed for the mighty end it has accomplished. The wife of Moses wailing over her infant at the moment it was consecrated to the God of Israel, murmured at the stroke of the cutting flint in this baptism of blood, or, as it is called, "the blood of the alliance;" but the tender mother was not conscious that the piercing cry of her child was the means of perpetuating an entire race.

CHAPTER X.

THE FOURTH GREAT CAUSE WHICH SEPARATED THE HEBREWS FROM ANY INTERCOURSE WITH THE PEOPLE WITH WHOM THEY LIVED.—THE PROHIBITION OF PARTAKING OF THE FOOD OF WHOEVER WAS NOT AN ISRAELITE.

THE simple distinction of pure and impure animals for food in the ritual of Moses, which was followed up by innumerable Rabbinical ordinances on aliments, has, more than any other of their rites and customs, thrown the people of Israel out of the great family of mankind.

A religious denial to partake of the food of another people, impedes the social functions of civil life, and estranges man from all the sympathies of fellowship. Mankind have always associated a hallowed feeling with

the rites of hospitality, a feeling which has been transmitted from the rudest, to the most polished æras. We find it in the Indian host, who watches his guest to supply his food; in the pledge-cup of the northern barbarian, and in the salt of the Arab; and whenever that sacred rite of hospitality has been fatally violated, it has aggravated even the enormous crimes of treachery or assassination.

The causes which led to the prohibition of certain aliments, and the distinctions observed of animals pure and impure, have only been partially conjectured, but never satisfactorily accounted for.

These difficulties may be traced to a remote period. Aristeus, the envoy of Ptolemy Philadelphus, having been sent to the high priest Eliezer, to procure a copy of the Greek version of the Pentateuch, inquired, why Moses had prohibited certain animals

from being eaten, and others from being sacrificed. The unexpected inquiry seems to have disconcerted the High Priest as much as it had puzzled the envoy, who himself was, probably, a Jew. The High Priest, however, proceeded to amuse the Egyptian ambassador, by assigning, as a reason, that the precepts concerning animals were enigmatical, like the symbols of Pythagoras and the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians. He described, with Æsopian fancy, how the hare represents libidinousness, the swine impurity, and the fox, craftiness; and with some occult conceits, how the ostrich was the representative of hypocrisy, because, though it mimicked the stork in the whiteness of its wings, it failed in its fleetness; while the chameleon, like the common flatterer, changed at will, reflecting a colour foreign to itself. These mystical fancies, in those puerile days, may have satisfied the too inquisitive envoy,

but certainly they never assisted him in comprehending the Law of Moses.

This opinion, that the prohibited animals were symbolically expressive of moral purity and impurity, was a Platonic reverie which, among others, was current with the Fathers*. Cardoso, when the principles of Judaism are not endangered by too acute and penetrating inquiries, is no unskilful reasoner. He has observed that some animals are declared to be clean which offer no doubtful symbols of vicious habits; as the goat for lasciviousness,

* The Gospel ascribed to Barnabas contains an amplification of these symbolical interpretations. See his puerile but amusing chapter ix., that the commands of Moses concerning clean and unclean beasts have a spiritual signification. Austin, Irenæus, Cyril, and Tertullian adopted this absurd mode of reasoning, as they did the nonsensical allegories of the Cabalists; and yet it is from these doting fathers that the church of Rome would draw the pure waters of the religion of Christ.

while others condemned as unclean are symbolical of virtues, as the dog, eminent for fidelity. This zealous Jew, having collected all that his learning or ingenuity could discover, fairly spun the net in which he is himself caught, and it is only by appealing in his distress to Heaven that his Rabbinical genius can silence any human objection.

"It is the obligation of Jews," says the ardent Hebrew, "to observe these precepts as coming from God, although to us the reason may be impenetrable; God exacts obedience and not speculation. But since the human understanding pants with the desire of knowledge; and is but too prone to investigate causes, everywhere searching for apparent or probable reasons, although the right and the certain are often hid from us, we may be allowed to inquire into the causes of the precepts; but to observe them is a duty which

precedes inquiry, and obedience is more acceptable than investigation*." So reasons our Bramin.

Of these prohibited animals and aliments many have been ascertained not to be sanitive. In the hot climate of the East, the swine, the hare; the fat or suet particularly enjoined to be burnt in the sacrifices, and never eaten; the blood corrupting in the meat; the limb of a living animal; the meat of one which had died; the rank shell-fish, the fat oyster; birds of prey and carnivorous animals; all these would be of bad digestion, and some even noxious. But the reason of forbidding certain aliments to be eaten by the Israelites could not be for any pernicious effects they might produce on their health, for the truth is that many of these forbidden aliments are not unwholesome; Pagan and Gentile ate of

* Las Excellencias de los Hebreos, p. 39. Col. ii.

them, and were not more sickly than the Israelite who so rigidly abstained. Among the prohibited animals are the rabbit, and some wild fowl, the moor-cock, and others which are more salutary than the flesh of the buffalo or wild ox, or the goat. The greater part of the prohibited food are noxious aliments, but all noxious aliments are not prohibited food. If the health of the Israelite had been the sole motive of these ordinances, a book of medical precepts had sufficiently warned the people. We are not told that these prohibited aliments are pernicious, but that they are impure; it was not commanded to avoid whatever is noxious, which would have left every one to decide for himself, but the aliments themselves are specified. Must we not therefore infer, asks the Jew Cardoso, that these injunctions are of divine institution for divine purposes? A learned Rabbin, at the time Napoleon held the extraordinary San-

hedrim at Paris, was called on to reply to those who, with political wisdom, would have abolished the ritual of forbidden food. His illustration of this difficult inquiry was ingenious, but the result was the argument of Cardoso. "The camel is an interdicted animal," replied the Chevalier de Cologna, Grand Rabbin, "and as we know that its flesh yields a nutritious and even delicate meat among the orientalists, the great legislator must have had some more important motive in prohibiting the use of these animals as food: and therefore we must infer that the distinction between clean and unclean animals must originate in a higher and more occult source*."

* Le Chevalier de Cologna, Grand Rabbin de Consistoire central des Israelites de France, in his observations on the work entitled "Les Juifs de XIX^me siècle." If that most useful animal of burthen, the camel, was rare during the administration of Moses, it would be a reason why it was wise not to kill it for food; and when it died it could not then be considered as wholesome.

To this day the Jews may eat of no beast which has not been slaughtered by a Jewish killer. He searches the animal or the fowl for any blemish, and on his approval it is called *kasher* or lawful; a leaden seal, stamped with the Hebrew word, is affixed to the meat, attesting its Jewish purity. Here again we discover this religious custom, as we have discovered others, among the Egyptian priests, whom Herodotus describes as minute examiners of the victim of sacrifice, that, as he tells us, it should be "free from those blemishes which are specified in their sacred books." The priest then applied the impression of his seal. "This seal," adds the father of profane history, "is of such great importance, that to sacrifice a beast which bears it not is deemed a capital offence*." The scape-goat of the Hebrews is found among the Egyptian

* Euterpe, s. 38.

priests, which Herodotus has described. The priests of Egypt imprecated on the head of the animal that "whatever evil threatened those who sacrificed might fall upon that head." The Egyptians never ate the head of an animal lest it should have undergone some awful malediction. But the similarity of the superstition is still more striking by what Herodotus further notices:—"When they have cursed the animal they sell it to the Grecian traders, or throw it into the river." This was exactly practised by the Israelites. We are struck by the similar customs of the Hebrews, the Egyptians, and the Hindoos, and we feel that there is a link wanting in the chain of ancient history which possibly may one day be recovered. We may even be astonished how an apparent trivial custom could, for some thousand centuries, still be operating as an inseparable obstacle to the melting down of this insu-

lated people with the nations among whom they live. The customs of oriental nations are stationary as the human mind seems to remain among them. These sealed meats, mean and trivial as the custom may seem, work a mighty result; for they serve to manifest the local existence of Judaism to some Jewish stranger. I can illustrate this fact by a curious anecdote. In a manuscript in my possession, which contains the history of the flight of some Spanish Jews from the inquisition about two centuries ago, in making the first port they could they landed at Embden. Without friends, and with no knowledge of the country, the wanderers stood lost, not knowing whither to direct their steps. On entering the city they met a lad carrying a goose with a label annexed to it "in characters well known," observes the cautious memorialist. By the Hebrew word *kasher* they instantly recognised the lad to be a Jew: a

discovery inspiring the emigrants with infinite joy. They followed the lad home, and, although their Spanish was not intelligible, the sealed meat served to guide the foreigners to their secret purpose, which was that of receiving the most solemn rite of Judaism from the hand of an Israelite, which they had found impracticable in catholic Spain.

Cardoso, in a weak attempt to reconcile the three contending systems which assigned the causes for the religious prohibition of certain animals, concludes, "In this difficult question we may accept all the three opinions; that the unclean animals are unwholesome; are symbols of vice; and have some occult impurity which contaminates the souls of Israel." In this manner formerly men reasoned on theological points which they could never resolve.

The distinction of forbidden meats in the Mosaic code, was an ordinance which com-

bined two great purposes. First, it abolished every domestic intercourse with the surrounding nations. The greatest of legislators betrays his minute anxiety to exclude his children from all communication with their neighbours; for though Heaven had granted him the inspiring conviction that his wavering multitude were designed to accomplish a great end, Israel had furnished but too many proofs of their partaking of our common nature, liable like their fellow-beings to the chances and the changes by which the Eternal regulates the destinies of empire. Spencer and other learned researchers on this point, have made an interesting discovery; many of the prohibited aliments were used among the rites of idolatry, and may be classed among those which Cardoso and his school imagined to have had "some occult impurity which contaminated the souls of Israel." The mystical conclusion of these

Rabbinists seems now cleared up, though probably they were ignorant of the real occasion. The other design of these ordinances is evident, where we find that many of the precepts were medicinal; on the health of a people, "the fewest of all people," and afflicted by a severe cutaneous disease, depended the public safety. We observe the inspired legislator through his entire code has combined the temporal with the religious happiness of his people.

We have offered on this curious and obscure subject of prohibited animals, and aliments, many evident causes for the origin of the Levitical precepts; but our labours must not yet close; we have now to show the monstrous extravagancies which the *doctors* of the synagogue have grafted on the Mosaic code. By a system of superstitions they have cast their people into a bondage of ridiculous *customs*, which have been converted

into solemn *rites* by their "Dictators," their "Opinionists," and their "Sublime Doctors." These have worked, by a scholastic casuistry, an imposture on the human understanding, only rivalled by the famous morality of the Jesuits, so brilliantly exposed by Pascal. The Rabbins shall be heard in their own defence, but we must also be allowed to detail the mischiefs we denounce, and offer an illustration of that juggle of the human understanding by which these subtle masters have subjugated the will of their unhappy slaves.

This simple circumstance of prohibited food has reduced the Hebrew nation to the state of the Hindoos; it has proved to them one of the heaviest curses which has fallen on their devoted heads. Hence, in all cities, they have been condemned, not always by Christian intolerance so much as their own, to inhabit separate and obscure quarters of a

city, too often become infamous by unmerited calumnies, always by sordid misery. Our own country reminds us of the *Jewry;* France of *La Rue des Juifs*, or *La Juiverie;* Italy by *Il Ghetto*, and Germany still pens the horde every night in its odious enclosures. Let us drop the curtain over this disgusting picture. Yet, admire the ardent Hebrew Cardoso, who, on this circumstance, which sinks man to the lowest degree of society, with that over-weening pride, the last resource of the enthusiast of misery, exults, that "these Jewish inclosures have not so much originated in the contempt of other nations, as in a particular providence to preserve Israel by this separation from the contagion of those vices and follies which are so easily caught;" as if the filthy Jewish quarters exhibited a purer morality or a more enlarged intellect than a city of Christians!

Some readers may smile in a dissertation of this grave nature on the genius of Judaism, when they are informed that the calamitous fortunes of the Hebrew have greatly revolved on so small a pivot as the inconsiderable circumstance of this people being forbidden to share in the meat of a Christian. I remember the day when, to the astonishment of all parties, Napoleon assembled a Jewish Sanhedrim in the city of Paris,—Napoleon, the conqueror of the world, was at that moment suspected, by some of the Rabbinical Opinionists, to be their Prince marching to universal victory—their long expected Messiah. The late Abraham Goldsmid once was listening intensely to the amelioration of his people, and to their acknowledged political equality of citizens. The restoration of the Jews seemed at hand. He was a man of generous sympathies, but he was "a son of the covenant;" rigid as the law which he obeyed,

and probably for which he would have suffered martyrdom, ere be wanting in a tittle. At the table of Royalty, this honest Hebrew was allowed to convey his own *kasher* dish; on no other terms would he have joined in an imperial banquet. Absorbed in the contemplation of the moral and political reform of the Jews, he was long silent, when, suddenly striking his forehead, he started this annihilating objection. "But what can be done for their eating?" Simple words! but the words of truth; for as it afterwards appeared, the forbidden aliments proved the main cause of the breaking up of the whole Sanhedrim; notwithstanding many enlightened philosophers were in that remarkable national assembly, and that many pressed concessions to obtain an important purpose, the "elders and their tradition" could not advance a single step out of their enchanted spell.

The follies of superstition, to minds not preoccupied by false associations, are exposed by their detail. The censure of the apostle to the Jews, for the "washing of cups and pots, and many other things," and the reprimand of Jesus, "laying aside the commandments of God, to hold the traditions of men," are as true at this day, as they were in the days of Christ.

A Rabbinical kitchen is a spot as awfully superstitious as that where formerly was held a witch's sabbath. Two spirits have been conjured up in the bewitched circle — there haunts *Kâsher*, the lawful food, and *Treffo*, the impure. Remove a pan, or handle a knife, and you raise that multiform demon *Treffo*, which no Hebrew dare touch; and whose diabolical agency is at eternal war with that benevolent spirit to hungry Jews, their beloved *Kasher*. This active diabolism of *Treffo* is occasioned by a

duplicate set of culinary utensils, to preserve the sanctity of the Mosaic kitchen; those dedicated to butter must not touch those appropriated for meat. Should a butter knife be stuck into a joint, or a meat knife be plunged into butter, that dread omen would shake a Jewish house. The *Kasher* vanishes for ever when the *Treffo* triumphs, and the dinnerless family, for there is no exorcism to expel this demon, with trembling and with curses, cast away the polluted food, or send it to "a stranger in the gates." Moses permits an impure animal to be sold to an alien*. How has this tradition of these duplicate utensils come down to them, and how has this panic been raised? The answer is ready. Not a single superstition, indeed, is practised, which is not founded on some scriptural phrase; or, if at a loss for

* Deut. xiv. 21.

the highest authority, the physical prohibition is educed from a metaphorical sense; the manner we shall now show. Moses forbids "seething a kid in its mother's milk"; as no reason is assigned, the Rabbins, not satisfied with the literal acceptation of the precept, extend it to all sorts of animals and to all sorts of milk; or, they allegorise the text. The Cabalists allege for this prohibition, that the flesh of a kid may not be cooked in its mother's milk, because milk is the symbol of pity, and the flesh that of judgment, and pity and judgment must be kept distinct. An admirable maxim, degraded by its ludicrous application. Why do the tribes of Israel for ever regret the absence of choice fillets and rumps? Father Jacob, wrestling with an angel, had the hollow of his thigh put out of joint; and this hamstringing of their Patriarch still occasioning disagreeable recollections, the sons and daughters of Israel

shall never regale on any hind quarter whatever. They may "not eat of the sinew which shrunk"—so many thousand years ago!

But they have their subterfuges and their equivocations, as well as their traditional ordinances. As the Mosaic code has prohibited the use of certain foods which in Europe are medicinal, such as shellfish, we find that even the Jewish bigot, like his Roman Catholic brother, can have his conscience accommodated by the subtlety of his Rabbin, as the other has flesh in his Lent by the device of his auricular confidant. A prescription of the physician is allowed to suspend the law of Moses. A Hebrew epicurean extorts the favour from his medical friend, and the palate of the Israelite eagerly relishes the forbidden and novel aliment. They can relax by connivance. Though stern and irresistible when their "traditions" are suspected, the Rabbins, like the Jesuits of the *Lettres*

Provinciales, have their *distinguo* and their *salvo*. It is a Rabbinical injunction that a Jew must not drink wine that has not been made by "a son of the covenant." In a wine country this was found perpetually inconvenient, and we find in Italy how the Rabbins escape from this dilemma by a subterfuge. They declare that "the law was designed to prevent all intercourse with idolaters, but did not extend to the nations among whom they now reside." For their casuistry I have compared the Rabbins with the sons of Ignatius, but they have not usually, like the Jesuits, justified crimes, or systematised immorality.

It must be confessed, however, that their tyranny seems at times to have approached *la morale practique*. The Pharisees, among other cross-examinations to tempt Jesus, asked "whether it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for *every cause?*" The

fact is, that the Rabbins, by their infamous glosses on a Scriptural text, and by that contempt in which the female sex seems to be held by the Orientalists, have treated Wives with an utter recklessness of domestic feeling; and in their morning thanksgivings there is one to God, "for not having been made a woman." In Deut. xxiv. 1—2, is this precept, "A wife may be put away or divorced, if she find no favour in her husband's eyes." The sacred text itself is vague; this afforded an opportunity to the Rabbins to draw the monstrous inference, that a man may put away his wife if he think another to be handsomer than her; and it is even maintained, for they build their follies as children build houses of cards, that a divorce may be allowed, even when a poor creature has suffered her husband's soup to be burnt.

That the Rabbins can teach to evade the law as well as to observe it; that on theolo-

gical points and in scholastic subtilty, they are not inferior to the artifices of Jesuitical casuistry; that "the Opinionists" can establish any opinion they choose, would not be difficult to demonstrate. If one affirms and the other denies; if this distinction binds, and the other distinction looses; if one blesses and the other curses; they have their choice at hand; if Rabbi Johanan says this, and Rabbi Eliezer says that, a third may contrive to believe both, accepting which suits for the nonce.

A remarkable circumstance of these Rabbinical Opinionists, which came authentically to my knowledge, may illustrate our subject. A Jewish gentleman, well known to the scientific world, and moreover a lover of ancient romances, had often luxuriated in the descriptions of the splendid banquet of the "Peacock," so famed in the Romances of Chivalry. In an hour of fancy he had a peacock killed; the skin was carefully taken whole

from the body, and when the bird was roasted and richly farced with aromatic spices, the skin was nicely replaced, and it was served up with its gorgeous plumage. A religious scruple suddenly haunted his mind that the demon *Trefo* sat on the peacock, and that its flesh was forbidden aliment. The Israelite despatched the brilliant fowl to the house of a neighbour, the Chief Rabbin, for his inspection. He told his tale, the Rabbin alternately looking on the gentleman and on the peacock:—at length the oracle! First he solemnly observed that there were some things of a doubtful nature, among which was the eating of peacocks. He opined that this bird was among the forbidden meats. "Be it so!" exclaimed the romantic Ritualist; "it was the fancy of a moment, and I have only lost a splendid bird; I have not transgressed. Since it is killed, I will send it as a curious dish to my neigh-

bour, who, being a Christian, is not perplexed by so difficult a ritual as our own. He may partake of the feast of the peacock."

"I would thank you for it myself," said the Rabbin.

"For what purpose?" interrogated the Ritualist.

"To eat it!" rejoined the master of sentences.

"How! If forbidden meat for me!—You understand the consequence?"

The Rabbin fixing his eyes on the Ritualist, and holding his finger up, as we mark our interjections in writing, to prepare the reader, (here the hearer,) for the notable wisdom forthcoming, and with an emphatic *distinguo!* thus opined the Opinionist. "Eating the peacock is, as I told you, among the doubtful things. One Rabbin is of one opinion, and another of anotner. You have required my opinion as your Rabbin; you are bound

to abide by it. I opine that it is unlawful to be eaten. My father was of a different opinion, and therefore it may be eaten by me, because I act on my father's opinion. I accept the peacock, but I must not ask you to participate in it."

The bird was lost for the Ritualist, and went to the Rabbin's table. Supposing that this was a case of conscience on both sides, as it certainly was on one, it is an instance of that juggle of the human understanding, which possibly was not perceived by either; for they had both submitted to the prostration of their intellect before that spirit of superstition which men have engendered amidst their human inventions.

Yet this bondage of *customs*, which have been converted into *rites*, and by what artifices practised on the scriptural texts we have shown, are all defended by the Rabbins. Leo de Modena observes, as he says, "in the words of a

great personage," that *Lex Judæorum* is *Lex puerorum;* the great personage to whom he alludes was Aben Ezra, whom the beam of philosophy had reached in dark times. Leo, however, asserts that the sense of these words is misunderstood; all these minute customs and ceremonies have been designed to conduct the Israelites to a holier life with the simplicity of children, and to put them out of the possibility of falling into errors. In our own times, at the Parisian Sanhedrim, we, find the Chevalier de Cologna, the Grand Rabbin of the French Israelites, insinuating that all these multiplied and minute ceremonies in the most common domestic offices, often too ludicrous for any grave notice, practised too on the most indifferent matters, were only attempts of the Rabbins to preserve their people in a more perfect holiness of living. As for the ordinances themselves they emanate from some precept of their

great legislator. Accepting this plea to its utmost extent, and reverencing any act which indicates true piety, the whole system is infinitely too complicated a machine for the purposes of life, but it is still more fatal, as an usurpation over the reason and the faculties of the Israelites. It may produce hypocrites who delight in exterior acts by which they impose on the world, but never was any interior religion raised by vulgar customs hourly repeated. To graft a ridiculous observance on a simple precept, is to lose the remembrance of the precept and to perpetuate the folly of the observance. If these customs originated in the spirit of religion, and not of domination, they are an evidence of the vain purposes of men, who bury their religion under a mass of superstitions. And the present exemplification of the Jewish ritual, as practised to this day, offers an unparalleled chapter in the history of national fatuity.

The first principle of Judaism was the worship of the Divine Being, aud an implicit obedience to the divine code; it was a paternal despotism. The last decline of this holy government sunk fast into a new sort of idolatry of customs and ceremonies, where the eye worshipped more than the heart. The Law, rendered nearly impracticable by their own inventions, and the genius of the "peculiar people," susceptible of vain superstitions, their ostentation gloried in the most complex and the most puerile observances, which they incorporated among their rites. Such was the triumph of those "whited sepulchres" the Pharisees, enemies of reform and of Christ. They built a labyrinth, from whose dark intricacies there was no issue; they hammered out a net-work of iron, from age to age, from whence no captive could extricate himself.

As their religion decayed and their superstitions multiplied, the human passions had a

wider stage opened whereon to perform their part. The pride of domination kindled in the breasts of "the Dictators," who held the fate of an enslaved people in their hands. Pale with vigils, but paramount in power, the Rabbins sat exalted in their chairs, while their disciples were "rolled in the dust of their feet," as they pompously described the sovereignty of their divinity schools. There at least the prostration of the body could not be as great as that of the understanding.

CHAPTER XI.

HISTORY OF JEWISH CONVERSIONS.

I ONCE might have been a prophet, who am now only an historian. On the institution of "The London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews," I wished to have told the tale I had particular opportunities to know*, and to have predicted of its agent, and of its inmates, all that has since occurred;

* I shall transcribe here the note I wrote in 1823. I have not heard of any improvement since. After an experiment of the first *six years*, this society had not procured more than *six proselytes annually*, including boys and girls from the lowest classes, according to the Society's Report in "Jewish Repository," vol. ii. p. 304. By the accounts of May, 1823, their revenue amounted to *ten thousand pounds annually*. I write it in words! They had, however, distributed seventy thousand tracts, and given away eight thousand testaments.

the shameful flight of the one, and the houseless objects whom Misery, indeed, might there keep stationary.

The society, long supported by the most honourable names, has erected a Temple to Proselytism, but no crowd has pressed on the threshold of the elegant edifice. This experiment has failed, like many preceding ones; and should there be found among the proselytes any of the temple of Aquila, like Simon of Sienna, Conrad Otto, Castelli, Albi, and a few more of name in their day, who, from converted Jews, relapsed again into their ancient Judaism, the society may be in danger of deducting from their gross amount of proselytes per annum!

Attempts of this nature have been made from the times of the Fathers, who, although they successfully demolished the decaying polytheistical institutions amidst which they lived, and which they therefore rightly compre-

hended, yet were they by no means successful in their attack on the Jewish faith, which they encountered with passion or with levity; unquestionably with deficient skill and knowledge. The Fathers do not offer the Jew arguments which every rational Christian would now use; and it is evident that the Jews and their dispersion, and their insulating customs, were as little known to the Fathers as to their masters the Romans. Some of the Fathers whose characteristics remind one of the doting Rabbins, seem to have been more conversant with devils than with their old brethren the Hebrews.

Justin Martyr has bequeathed us a voluminous conference which he held for two days with the Jew Trypho. We are surprised to find that this Father knew little of the rites and customs of the singular people against whom he was directing his ludicrous conceits, which assuredly could be no arguments for

them. Tertullian, in his celebrated Apology, indulges a Roman and popular invective against the Hebrews, declaring that they were vagrants, who owned neither man nor God for their sovereign; and Ambrose and Austin reproach a conquered people that they cannot rise to be emperors or præfects. The Fathers knew little of the Jews, and less of human nature; to vilify the wretched, and then to exult over their civil degradation, is no means of conversion, but of exciting the most terrific passions, — implacable hatred, and suppressed vengeance.

In the iron ages of barbarised Christianity, when the massacre had fatigued, or the contributions no longer could be levied, the mode of converting the Jews was by public conferences. Abbots and Rabbins, marshalled in due order, encountered each other with their selected arms of theological logomachy. An ignorant crowd of auditors shouted or

murmured, as the champions of their parties appeared to advance or to retreat in this wordy ordeal. The Hebrews often embarrassed to show that the Messiah had not yet appeared, in that dilemma usually contrived to give a new turn to this polemical tilting match, by quarrelling on allegorical interpretations and applied texts. It sometimes happened that the Rabbins, in their zeal with the idolaters, for after all no Protestant will deny that these pagan Christians were no better, would forget in their insolence that they were addressing their lords. This was sometimes brought to their recollections, and then they would close with an ambiguous retractation, or according to some Jewish accounts, a round sum was scattered among the bishops to break up the conference suddenly: so that each party afterwards consoled themselves by repeating their most successful points of attack. But as the

triumphs of the Jews are chronicled in Hebrew, or lie buried in some manuscript, we read only of their complete discomfiture. Nor is this improbable, for the Jews evidently were compelled to dissimulate, and even forced baptisms sometimes followed. These conferences, however, did not always terminate in such amicable confusion; on such occasions the brutal energy of some ignorant but strong-boned knight, would disgrace the order of chivalry.

Old Joinville, the admirable chronicler of that period, furnishes a perfectly characteristic anecdote of these conferences. In the midst of a Jewish disputation held with the Abbot of the monastery of Clugny, the old abbot, after many a retrograding movement, becoming short of arguments to refute the Rabbin, had exhausted the attention of the auditors. Observing how ill matters proceeded, an ancient knight leaning on his staff, begged

the Abbot to let him put in his word, which he promised should finish the discussion at once. The favour was gladly accepted by the Abbot, who was himself wearied by the obdurate Rabbin. The Knight came at once to the point, by demanding of the Chief Rabbin whether he was a believer in one of the great mysteries of Christianity? The Rabbin replied, that that was the very subject of their discussion, to which he had proffered a negative. "Then you are mad!" cried the Knight, "and insolent too! since you do not believe this, and have dared to enter Christ's monastery and his house; and for this, now shall you know and lack no remembrance of Him!" So saying, the Knight, lifting his staff, sent a thundering blow under the ear of the Rabbin and felled the circumcised. This mode of argument put all the Jews to flight, without, however, being converted. The Abbot was in as ill

a humour, for he considered that he had lost the day by it, insisting that they were on the point of conversion, had the Knight not interrupted his last irrefutable argument. "You have committed a great folly," said the Abbot, "in cutting down the Rabbin whom I was about to confute." "And you a greater," retorted the ancient Knight, "in bringing these Jews with their long arguments before such an assembly of good Christians." This story was told to the old chronicler by St. Louis, whose remark on the occasion shows the utmost stretch of the philosophy of that day; a strange mixture of theology and chivalry. "None but learned clerks," said the French monarch, "should dispute with the Jews, but every layman ought to use the edge of his sword; *a bonne espée tranchant.*" St. Louis inferred that the doughty knight did wrong to confute the Jew, but right in knocking him down.

Several accounts of these Jewish conferences appear in the middle ages; whenever an abbot or a pope condescended to court popularity they despatched an invitation to the Rabbins. The most memorable conference recorded in the Jewish annals occurred under the Spaniard, Peter of Luna. Having assumed the papacy under the name of Benedict XIII., when driven to Aragon, the usurper tried at popular favour, as that current had strongly set against him,—by a great baptism of Jews. His physician, who was himself a converted Jew, suggested a public conference, engaging to confute the Israelites, not by the usual arguments, but with their own weapons drawn from their own Talmud. This promised both novelty and success. His Holiness assembled the Rabbins from all quarters; and whether it were to soften these opponents into more tenderness by compliment and courtesies, the Pope paid all their travelling expenses, and provided accommo-

dations for "the chief of the captivity," and all the rest of the captives, as "princes of the house of David." The later Rabbins, though they have preserved their Jewish obduracy, from their helpless situation have usually betrayed its accompanying poverty of spirit, and on receiving courtesies from Christian sovereigns they have usually adopted a style of servile blasphemy. They betrayed this characteristic in their strange idolatry when they inscribed the initials of Napoleon and his Empress and fixed the imperial eagle on the ark of their synagogue. The same now occurred with this anti-pope, who had paid all their travelling expenses, and to whom they now applied the words of the Psalmist addressed to his Creator*.

The Rabbins, however they adulated the Pope for their comforts during the confer-

* Psalm lxxxv.

ence, at the same time were secretly maledicting the malice of the apostate physician, who had entrapped his old friends into this dilemma. The conference opened. "The Epicurean," so the Rabbins called the traitor of their faith, announced that he had drawn twenty and four passages from their own writings to demonstrate that the twenty and four marks by which they had settled to describe the character of the Messiah, had been fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. It would therefore be a consequence, which they could not possibly elude, that they could not deny the evidence, for they stood refuted out of their own mouths. It was a flourishing prelude, and the Rabbins had to practise all the arts of theological diplomacy. Each of these four and twenty proofs, however, they first insisted on should be tried by their thirteen modes of reasoning; a scholastic logic which was said to have come down from

Mount Sinai, but which could either prove or leave a subject in a state impossible to be proved. But the new Christian was ready to fling the dust of their schools into their old eyes. He calculated the years of the great advent by a tradition of Elias, that a period of 2000 years was to pass in a state of nature; two more under the law, and two under the Messiah. But he was short in his first calculation, since four thousand years had not elapsed before the birth of Jesus. He replied that the Scripture does not always count rightly, for the children of Israel did not remain two hundred years in Egypt, yet God had predicted they were to have been more than four hundred. The mystical birth of the Messiah appeared in the closed M in the Hebrew word of Virgo, which denoted both her virginity and the initial of her name. Never had a Christian so much of the Jew in

him, so that the conference afforded no hopes of closing during the popedom.

At length, and as usual, something was said deemed insolent to a Catholic ear—it would have sounded true to a Protestant had there then been one in the world. The Pope's physician, after all his vaunts, turned out a miserable piece of theological quackery. He was only weighing chaff against chaff. The assembly suddenly broke up, but the apostate physician, who could not succeed in making the Talmudists surrender, resolved the Talmud itself should; for he presented His Holiness with a copious supply of perilous passages from that great work, equally derogatory to the law of Moses, the Messiah, and the Christians, and proposing to end all controversies by a general conflagration of all the Talmuds. A hoary Rabbin, as an expedient to save their honour, ad-

dressed a state paper to the Pope, not as a denial of the faithfulness of the extracts, but as a protest that however erroneous the passages seemed, they admitted of another construction than the sense in which they had been understood by His Holiness's most learned physician; not that he himself presumed that he always understood the occult wisdom. This was condemning the Talmud by the Talmudists themselves; a dishonourable compromise, but among them all, one Spanish Rabbin alone would not subscribe. The fruits of the conference were abundant, according to the Catholics, notwithstanding the cabalistical conundrums of His Holiness's learned physician. It induced five thousand Israelites to abjure the faith of their fathers. Spain was then as Judaised as England was long Catholicised, and these rapid changes in exterior religion depended greatly on the state of the government. The Jewish historians on

this occasion deny that the old Rabbin's state-paper was a retraction of the Talmud, but acknowledge that a heavy sum was wrung from these Israelites to save their Talmuds and their honours. They do not however deny the progress of the general conversion, and the Spanish Rabbin, who refused his signature, Joseph Albo, eminent in the Jewish annals, immediately composed a celebrated work, in which he contracted the principles of Judaism into three simple articles of faith. At the end of our follies we learn wisdom. Albo compressed Judaism into three articles! He imagined that, frightened by their voluminous Talmud containing so many objectionable passages, and the multiplicity of their rites, the wavering Hebrews would rush into the waters of baptism *.

* The history of this conference was discovered in a MS. in the public library at Venice, by the Jesuit Bar-

At a later period professorships were instituted for the conversion of the Jews—in Italy, in France, and in Germany. At Rome the Hebrews were compelled to attend a course of lectures. I have seen one of these periodical lectures printed, where the friar acknowledges to have occupied the whole summer in demonstrating the nature of the Trinity, and promises for the next course to develope the nature of the real presence. How the Hebrew auditors

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tolacci, then occupied in his researches for his great Bibliotheca Rabbinica, where it is found.

Mark the changes of time. In 1816, a Jew at Rome having received baptism, and relapsing into his ancient faith, it was conjectured that he could not long see the light. The Pope, however, issued an edict respecting this relapsed Jew, "desiring all Rome to pity him; that persecution is used by false prophets and false teachers, and that this man who now wished to be deprived of light, may serve to promote the great design of Providence." The successor of this Pope renewed something of the ancient rigour of the papacy.

Times, May, 1816.

felt during these lectures, we may learn from various quarters. Evelyn, who was present at one, describes "their spitting and humming while they are obliged to sit out the sermon." And he adds that "few converts are made." At Carpentras in France, the bishops appointed such lectures for Saturdays, that their trading might not suffer. At first they were decently silent, but the tenth repetition did not please—they grew noisy. The bishop complained to the magistrates of Carpentras, but though the whole corporation could not assist the bishop in making his sermons effective, that something might be done—the assembled magistracy, drove out the sons of Abraham from the town of Carpentras, for ever!

These were Roman Catholic countries; but at Cassel, under the wing of the Reformed church, the Jews were compelled to learn a catechism, and to attend a peric-

dical lecture, where the grounds of Christianity were rationally opened to their Jewish brethren. The idolatry of Rome was no longer obtruded on the Jewish mind, and many of the Hebrews were moved even to tears by the pathetic exhortations to which they listened. And yet, adds my reporter, justly expressing his astonishment, "None of them have been converted *."

Severe measures for the conversion of Jews have only led to a forced renunciation of their ancient faith; and the strictest precautions were found necessary to prevent the Israelite from returning to the Synagogue. The council of Agde required that no Jew should receive the rite of baptism until he had passed the probation of six months in the rank of a catechumen; and the second council of Nice, discovering that

* Dury's Case of Conscience.

there were new converts openly ridiculing the rites of Christianity which they had accepted, condemned them to make a public profession of their ancient religion. Even when the seduction of gentle persuasion was employed, as in the case of some patron to whom a Hebrew lay under obligations, it is curious to observe how entreaties to receive baptism were returned by timid apologies, or distant promises. The greatest converter of Jews was Vincent Ferrier, whose name is emblazoned in the Spanish martyrology. His conversions consisted of large bodies of Hebrews, set off with the pomp which his royal master Ferdinand of Spain lent on these occasions. Eight thousand Moors, fifty thousand Jews, and one hundred thousand bad Christians, afterwards called *Christianos Novos*, baptized but suspected of Judaism, were the quiet victims of his intrigues. At that period the saving

grace of Christianity, such as Christianity then was, seems to have consisted in driving herds of them to the river side, as their driver held a crucifix in his hand. These mighty conversions, splendid in their exterior, were hollow within—and they never lasted. Violence on one side and necessity on the other, had spread a general dissimulation among this populace of converts. These flocks of Jews were still secretly preferring the baptism of blood to the baptism of water, and still feasted on their paschal lamb in some hiding place of this new Egypt. In the Vatican a letter is preserved from a converted Rabbin, who exhorts his son *not to imitate his fathers.* At first sight the writer would appear to advise his son not to persist in Judaism, but he becomes less ambiguous as he proceeds; and the postscript of that letter, a postscript, which, however, never was written, appeared, when a few

years afterwards, the new Christian tore away the mask, returning to his ancient Judaism

In happier times, and with a nobler spirit, the Jewish controversy was saved out of the profane hands of the sanguinary or the imbecile idolaters of the Roman church. The new church of the Reformed enlarged the sphere of religious inquiry; it had itself been too long a school of affliction not to sympathise with the afflicted. The first blessing on mankind by the Reformation, was the establishment of that toleration which they had so long wanted. This step approximated Christianity towards Judaism; they ceased to be enemies; they were neighbours. The Hebrews were no longer hunted down as wild animals, but invited, like sheep straying without a shepherd, into the fold.

* Bartolacci, Bib. Rab., iii. 404.

There had long prevailed among the Reformed a notion, that the Jews were on the point of returning to the land of their fathers, and in their restoration were to embrace the truths of the Gospel. The most learned men in Europe expounded the Apocalypse, calculated the weeks of Daniel, and lost themselves in that night of mysticism which had spread over the study of theology. Nothing less for these wretched hordes was promised by these benevolent Christians, than that they were to be their firmest allies in this new empire; the City of Jerusalem was to hold "kings and chief monarchs of the earth to sway and govern all for the glory of Christ." I am transcribing from a manuscript letter of the learned Joseph Mede, who has sanctioned a work published by the great lawyer Sir Henry Finch*, in

* Mr. Alexander Chalmers in his account of this learned lawyer (Sir Henry Finch), has observed, that

the days of James the First. That this work produced a sensation at Court, is evident by

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his work, "On the Calling of the Jews," is so imperfectly described by Wood, that it is not easy to discover its drift. That such a complaint may no longer exist, I shall here print the manuscript letter of the learned Joseph Mede:—

"*Mr. Joseph Mede to M. Stuteville.*

"*April* 7, 1621.

"I have seen Sir Henry Finch, who has published 'The World's great Restauration or Calling of the Jews, and with them of all the Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth, to the faith of Christ.' I cannot see but for the main of the discourse I might assent unto him. God forgive me if it be a sin, but I have thought so many a day. But the thing which touches his Majesty in this point which I will write out for you *verbatim*:—'The Jews and all Israel shall return to their land and antient seats, conquer their foes, have their soil more fruitfull than ever. They shall erect a glorious church in the land of Judah itself, and bear rule far and near. We need not be afraid to aver and maintain that one day they shall come to Jerusalem again; be kings and chief monarchs of the earth, sway and govern all, for the glory of Christ that shall shine amongst them.' And this is it Lactantius saith, lib. vii., chap. 15. '*The Roman name (I will speak it because*

the anecdote which enriches the letter, that James the First said that, "He was too auld a king to do his homage at Jerusalem." We might refer to more recent instances of these visionary theologians; vain men who have brought many Rabbinical deliriums into Christian expositions*.

A more rational controversy succeeded.

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it must one day be) shall be taken from the earth, and the empire shall return to Asia; and again shall the East bear dominion and the West be in subjection.' In another place, 'Ashur and Egypt, all these large and vast countries shall be converted to Christ; the chief sway and sovereignty remaining with the Jews.' All nations shall honour them.

"The king says he shall be a pure king, and he is so auld that he cannot tell how to do his homage at Jerusalem."

* That the reader may form a correct notion of this class of presumptive prophets, let him consult the index to Burnet's History; under the article, "Lloyd Bishop of Worcester," in his interview with Queen Anne, in the presence of statesmen; how he expounded, how they reasoned, and how in a passion the erudite bishop desired to resign his bishopric.

Grotius, in his treatise on "the Truth of Christianity," put forth a refutation of Judaism. Leslie, who had written folios of controversial divinity, imagined his "Short and Easy Methods," which he diversely addressed to Catholics, to Deists, and to Jews, were infallible.

The most admirable monument in the Jewish controversy is the published conference which the learned Limborch maintained with the Jew Orobio. The small but favourite volume* was accepted by all parties, for even the Romanist only excepts "les sorties que Limborch fait contre les Catholiques," and the Hebrew is not displeased to find his arguments urged by Orobio, a subtle disputant. Orobio had suffered a close confinement in a narrow cell of the Inquisition

* *De Veritate Religionis Christianæ, Amico Collatio cum erudito Judæo.* Basle, 1740. The last and best edition.—*Brunet.*

during four years, in horrible torment and distraction, till, as he has himself told, he became almost doubtful of his personal identity. He had studied in Spain the old scholastic philosophy; and now the metaphysician, cut off from all human intercourse whatever, found a resource for life itself in undertaking every day to maintain a disputation, in which he was by turns moderator, opponent, and respondent. Limborch has stated the unexpected points of his adversary's attacks or his defence, and his own refutations, with the purest integrity, in this "friendly conference," which merits its title. Limborch embarrassed Orobio by reducing him to acknowledge that he could furnish no proof of the truth of the Mosaic religion, but which equally served to demonstrate that of Christianity. Orobio discovered that it was easier to raise objections against the Christian doctrine, than to demonstrate the verity of

the Jewish. The subtle Hebrew tenaciously inferred that, as he could discover no motive to change his religion, he thought that every one should remain in the religion of his fathers, it being more easy to raise objections to another mode of faith than to demonstrate the verity of our own. These famous polemics parted as they had met, with mutual esteem, but not with mutual conviction. From the same acknowledged facts they had deduced opposite conclusions, and when texts were adjusted they persisted in assigning different explications. Each party may still be referred to as having exposed the opposite principles of Judaism and Christianity.

The Romanists have asserted that this Spaniard Orobio was a man of no religion. Had he been such, he would not have been immured alive for years. Having escaped from his living grave, he settled in France. There he was disgusted with the same forms of a reli-

gion which he could not endure; and at length settling in Holland as a Jewish physician, he cast off his catholic baptismal name Balthazar, and adopted the more consecrated one of Isaac. He suffered the severest rite on his entrance into Judaism, which, late in life, is not performed without endangering it. We ought not to doubt the sincere piety of Orobio, any more than we do that of Limborch. The conviction of the truth of their respective modes of faith, was a blessing that came from Heaven.

In our own days we have witnessed the imprudent and cruel proceedings of the enthusiastic LAVATER. He dedicated Bonnet's work on Christianity to Moses MENDELSOHN, and challenged that tranquil and platonic genius, either to do that which the love of truth ought to compel him, by renouncing Judaism, or to refute Bonnet. The Jewish philosopher, involuntarily, was dragged into a

public correspondence. The Hebrew pleaded with his accustomed delicacy and nervous sensitiveness, and to close the interminable dispute, for some of the German divinity professors had gradually been brought into the midst of the polemical conflict, the Jewish philosopher, with more energy than his usual amenity approved, awfully, as if in anger, exclaimed, "I am as firmly persuaded of the essential of my religion as you and Mr. Bonnet can be of your's, and I attest before the God of truth, our Creator and our Preserver, by whom you conjure me, that I will remain in my principles as long as my soul shall not change its nature." Mendelsohn has accurately expressed his notion, by the "*essential* of his religion;" sensible of the corruptions of Judaism: and this eloquent metaphysician, in his "Jerusalem," was not, I believe, held to be the most orthodox Hebrew by his own Rabbins

I could here furnish the reader with the

secret history of many Jewish conversions, of which I possess some extraordinary documents, both of the last century and of the present. But the misery of weak minds, or the impostures of gross knaves, are details which are of no consideration in this view of the Genius of Judaism.

The most learned Christians have composed excellent treatises; Jewish lectures have been delivered, even by converted Jews; conferences, both public and private, have been held; and societies, industrious like "the London," assisted by every human means. We have arguments the most demonstrative on one side, and refutations the most complete on the other; exhortations which have drawn tears from both parties, and satires the most witty and malicious.

But the cause of truth, or of Christianity, will never be advanced by indirect or subdolous practices, which have been often employed

by inferior agents in this trade of conversion; by hunting after miserable proselytes in the dark purlieus of filthy quarters, parentless children, or torn from their disconsolate parents; by agonising the conscience of thoughtless persons; or importing young Polanders, who lose their Jewish complexion by fattening at the tables of their generous hosts; or even by occasionally picking up a stupid illiterate Rabbin, who reminds us of the description which the Florentine Poggio has left us in an account of his own Hebrew studies, "I pass many jokes on my tutor, a stupid, unsteady, and illiterate man: which indeed is the general character of those who are converted from Judaism to Christianity."

The conversion of Jews to Christianity, reformed Christianity, must be looked for by a different principle than the modes hitherto pursued.

A sincere Christian, without any diminu-

tion of his evangelical faith, may be satisfied that nothing short of an universal miracle can be "a sign" to the religious Israelite for his conversion to Christianity. It is not by disputed texts; by prophecies variously applied; by mystical types, or even by historical incidents, ambiguous or contradictory, that the immutable Hebrew can be altered in the singular and supernatural position in which he has been fixed by Providence. For centuries after centuries men, blinding themselves with the dust of their libraries, have finally imagined that they have opened the secret and ineffable way of the Supreme Being; but what are their mighty folios? monuments of their passions; but frail as the opinions which they entertain. It is a singular, but wondrous truth, that God has granted to the Hebrew arguments and to the Christian refutations, which each repeat; for the conviction is equal on both sides.

According to the eighth article of the creed of the Jew, he is to believe that there is no distinction in point of authenticity between the passage, "and the children of Ham were Cush and Misraim,"—and, "I am the Lord thy God:" "all are equally alike *the word of God*, delivered by him to Moses*. There is something monstrous in this unintelligent view of the historical annals, and the ecclesiastical, the civil, and other laws in the code of Moses; but there are articles as monstrous in other creeds, besides the Hebraic.

On this principle, the literal Jew, for he is ever literal when he has to encounter the typical and allegorical style of the Christian, takes his impregnable position. For the Hebrew, reared in the faith of his fathers, there are insuperable difficulties in abjuring

* Levi's Letters to Dr. Priestly, 14.

his ancient creed, which lie not in the way of him who has received the water of Christianity. The Jew has to annul what he adores as the dictation of the Creator himself; a code of perpetual obligation, and "everlasting," while the Christian has only to preserve his own possession. The elder religion clings to one revelation, while the younger enjoys a happier inheritance in two. The Christian exults in the completion of that Judaism which the Hebrew contemplated as perfect at its divine institution. The enlightened Christian should not indeed persecute his ancient brother, since Christianity and Judaism rest on the same foundation; nor is the faith of either in danger from the other, since the apostolical narratives are not more authentic for the Christian, than when at Sinai, the Lord "came in a thick cloud," and the people saw that "God talked to man." But the greatest obstacle to the

conversion of the unfortunate Israelite, whenever he may be disposed to embrace the Gospel, is the choice of his converter. Christianity becomes for our neophyte a world of waters, and no where shall this dove find a green branch to rest his weary wing; for, let the Hebrew choose where he will, he must be deemed impious, or be condemned by other Christians. Dissenters rise against dissenters, missions are expedited against missions; all alike prompt to convert, while each establishes his own dogma, his peculiar rule of faith. Let those who are born in the happy faith of Christianity compassionate the Jew, for we cannot relieve him. A single step only divides Judaism from Christianity, but Heaven has interposed, and for "the son of the covenant," that step no human effort shall pass—though, like the Talmudical wall which divides heaven from earth, that step is but a hair's breadth.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE CAUSES OF THE UNIVERSAL HATRED OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE.

AMONG every people the Hebrews have found a malignant Apion; that man who, to please the Alexandrians, would hesitate at no lie to stigmatise the Israelite, and headed a deputation to Caligula that, by the force of his invectives and the audacity of his calumnies, this public denouncer might obtain their expulsion. Why were this holy people ever hated by their neighbours? Josephus, in speaking of his nation, who were utterly unknown to the Greeks, to vouch for their antiquity, refers to the Egyptian and Phœnician writers, observing, however, that "the Egyptians hate us, the Phœnicians do not

like us, and those particularly of Tyre are our declared enemies; of the Chaldeans I cannot say so much, for they have reigned over our nation*."

The Deity, in the election of his people Israel as his "peculiar treasure," accompanied the graces bestowed on them by the trial of concomitant afflictions. The real cause of the universal hatred which the Hebrews have excited in every nation and every age, may be traced to their unparalleled institutions, and because it was decreed that they should be "a peculiar people." They have had to encounter, with such holy intrepidity and glory, the antipathies and the calumnies which "a peculiar people" only could have endured.

At first, surrounded by seven nations, each mightier than themselves, when "the fewest

* Josephus's Answer to Apion, chap. iv.

of all people" were chosen as the head of all nations, the conquest of their neighbours was proclaimed in the name of "the Lord of Hosts." The sacerdotal republic became necessarily a military one. The whole history of the ancient Jews is that of religious wars; and the history of the modern is the inevitable result of the ancient. The ancient exhibits an universal hostility; the modern an universal persecution. When triumphant, the armies of Israel promulgated the faith of their ancestors; when conquered, they voluntarily sealed their holy Code with their blood, or in secrecy wept over it.

Severe and awful was the genius of the Hebrew Legislator, though paternal and eminently provident of the common affairs of life. He whose mighty mind had protected the mother-bird in her nest, the growth of the fruit tree through the stages of maturity, had granted "a release" to the poor man in

his bondage. He who commanded, that he who builds a house should encircle the roof with a battlement, that no man shall fall and "bring blood upon thine house."—He who would not suffer to be dragged to battle him who was planting a vineyard, or had betrothed a wife, or was fearful and faint-hearted,* this father-lawgiver, by the difficult position which he held, had blown the flame of conquest in the breasts of his people, by pointing to their hopes a promised land—a land to be wrested from their possessors at "the

* "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young." Deut. xxii. 6.

No tree was to be plucked of its fruit till its maturity. In the first three years of its bearing it was called, "uncircumcised," in the fourth it was dedicated to the Lord, and was only eaten on the fifth. Nor were any fruit trees to be used for implements of war, for these objects he commanded to use only the wild trees that "be not trees for meat." Deut. xx. 19, 20.

edge of the sword." Mankind was to be subdued by "*the fear of the Lord.*" In every city which defended its entrance, the Israelites were not "to leave a soul alive*;" it was a *religion of war*. The mystery of the mission was accomplished. But the missionaries incurred the odium of the whole human race. A sect arose in the second

* Deut. xx. 16.

To remove this sanguinary stigma from the Hebrews, which has always inflicted a horror on the Jew and the Christian of later times, the Rabbins delivered a precept which somewhat mitigates this anathema of human destruction. "According to the precept of our Rabbins," says the High Priest in a modern sermon, "we are directed in the siege or blockade of a town, always to leave a part open for the flight of any of the inhabitants who would save themselves." I do not understand military affairs, and less the tactics of the Rabbins; but to "leave a part open," would admit of reinforcements as well as of flight. I rather suspect that this humane precept was promulgated in ages when the Jews were no longer conquerors, and dreaded a massacre for a massacre. Maimonides notices it *De Regibus et Bellis eorum*, Part iv. chap. vi.: and Mikotti Præcep. Affirm. 118.

century of Christianity who, shocked by the inhuman wars of the Jews, indulged the heretical notion that the God of the Jews could not be the God of the Christians. The benevolence of the Creator could only be experienced by the creature in *a religion of peace*, whose founder, possessing every virtue under a human appearance, inculcated "the love of God," invoking "Our Father who art in heaven!" It was only when papal Christianity relapsed into the severity of Judaism, and affected the splendours of the synagogue, that the intolerant and exterminating genius was resuscitated; and when Christianity abandoned the Judaic genius of the papal, it became necessary to recommend itself by express treatises on Toleration; yet toleration is still found to be a very doubtful and even dangerous concession. In the creed of a great portion of Christian Europe, Toleration is called the cry of a weak minority.

The second cause which provoked the hatred of other nations for the Hebrews, was their just veneration of the Holy Code; but, as was usual with this vain people, it excited their contempt for the laws of all other nations. When they became a people without a country, their vindictive masters retaliated, and the laws of Moses, concealed in an unknown language, yet living on the lips of the circumcised, aroused the indignation and multiplied the calumnies of every man of genius who could only behold in an abject people an obdurate and contemptible race. The stern painter of manners among the Romans, to exemplify the results of a bad education, according to his notions, points at those who "are born of fathers who keep the sabbath day, and learn by rote their secret law delivered by Moses." It is Juvenal's retaliation for the Jewish contempt of the Roman laws.

Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges
Judaicum ediscunt, et servant ac metuent Jus,
Tradidit *arcano* quodcunque *volumine* Moses.

And taught the Roman ritual to deride,
Clings to the Jewish, and observes with awe
All Moses bade in his mysterious law.

GIFFORD.

The declamatory satirist could only ridicule what he could not comprehend; for Juvenal imagined that the Jews, having no visible Deity, and often looking upwards to heaven in their orisons, worshipped the clouds and the sky. Their unsocial habits incurred the suspicions of the vulgar, and the lofty Roman condescends to collect the most vulgar tales, of their sullenness to travellers, misdirecting their journey, and refusing to allay their thirst, unless they were brothers of the circumcision, and ascribes these evil habits to idling away one whole day in the week: to abstain from pork and to

despise the Roman laws, with Juvenal seems to constitute Judaism.

The ancient Polytheists had no real knowledge of the Jews. The Egyptians were known to the Greeks by their maritime intercourse, but the Hebrews, from their inland locality, were shut out from the world. Aristotle classes the Hebrews among the Bramins of India, probably from their separation among every people. Plutarch accuses the Jews of worshipping the hog, having observed them rigidly abstain from that animal as food. Among the Romans they were censured as a people without religion, deniers as they were of a plurality of deities. Florus writes of them *impiæ gentis*. Justin, Strabo, and Appian, equally betray the same ignorance of this people, and fall into the same popular misconceptions. The philosophical Tacitus, the only great writer of antiquity who caught a gleam of the revelation of Judaism, when

he looked on the despised hordes of the Israelites at Rome, could venture in his immortal style to brand them, pronouncing that *inter se nihil illicitum*. Tacitus classed the Jews among the worshippers of Bacchus, from the circumstance that Pompey had found a golden vine among the ornaments of the temple, and the feast of tabernacles happening at the time of the celebration of the orgies. Jews and Christians were long undistinguished among the Romans; hence Suetonius, in his life of Claudius, ascribes the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, to the frequent seditions raised among them by their chief *Chrestus*. Suetonius had probably heard of the dissensions between the Christians and the Judaising Christians. The early Christians, who were so long confounded with the Jews in the cruel reign of Domitian, with them were condemned for the crime of impiety; the worship of a single

God seemed a sort of atheism to the Polytheist! Christians were classed among prostitutes and adventurers who paid a tax to be allowed to reside at Rome. Such is the testimony of the indignant Tertullian. Confiscations of Jewish or Christian property were frequent. The crime of impiety involved the punishment of death. Nerva, the successor of Domitian, ordained that none of his subjects should be persecuted for religion, for "*impiety* or *Judaism.*" A medal bears this interesting inscription, perpetuating the fact;

Calumnia, Fisci, Judaici sublata;

importing that Calumny from Taxation is abolished, and that the Jews had ceased to be burdened by heavy penalties under those false pretexts which they had recently incurred under Domitian.*

* Petit, Var. Lect., p. 2569, apud Basnage.

By what the ancients have delivered to us on the Jews, the most illustrious names of learned antiquity have left on record a perpetual evidence how their history, unsanctioned by authority, may have been too frequently supplied by popular tales and uncertain traditions. They have sent down to us the most puerile fancies, the grossest misconceptions, and the most malignant calumnies concerning this people. When a conquered race becomes despised, even the inquisitive cease to inquire after foreigners, and we discover here a remarkable evidence of the misconceptions which one people may form of another, by deciding on customs which they have observed without inquiry.

The Epicurean urbanity of HORACE, could only sear in pleasantry, without inflicting an inflaming wound on these adorers of antiquity, "the curtailed Jews,"—but the

Vin 'tu
Curtis Judæi oppedere?

expresses his contempt, without the accustomed delicacy of his raillery. With finer humour the poet avenges himself on the Anti-poetical, alluding to the Jewish, perhaps the Christian zeal for acquiring proselytes, he threatens to convert them to poetry.

ac veluti te
Judæi cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.
Sat. lib. i. iv. 143.
To force you, like the proselyting Jews,
To be, like us, a brother of the Muse.
FRANCIS.

He treats them as superstitious and credulous, for on his journey when he hears of a miraculous incident which occurred at the gate of a Temple, he exclaims, "Let the Jew, Appella, believe it, not I!"

Credat Judæus Appella,
Non ego.
Sat. lib. i. v. 100.

The Jew, Appella, was probably a distin-

guished Jew at Rome, who practised Judaism with fervour. The Polytheists accused the Jews and Christians of credulity; Appella had no doubt related to the Idolaters, the miracles of Sacred History; and though Polytheism was itself a series of absurd metamorphoses, yet such is the obduracy of a predisposition that they could refuse their belief to the most sublime interpositions of the Divinity. The Jews were numerous at Rome in the days of Horace, and it is evident that some were found in the higher classes. A beloved friend of Horace's was a Jew and a poet; the Fuscus Aristius, whom he includes among his other great friends, Pollio, Varius, Mæcenas, and Virgil; and whom he could not stop on his way, hastening to the Synagogue *.

* Sat. i. lib. x. v. 83. The addresses to Fuscus, Epist. x. lib. i., and again his fine Ode, lib. i., xxii.

The philosophic genius of Tacitus, which nowhere insinuates that the deities of his country were monstrous imaginations or a fabulous machinery, could declare that the Jewish rites were ridiculous, and was astonished why this solitary and sullen people profaned whatever the Romans held sacred. This profound genius discovered, however, as he imagined, the real cause of the peculiarities of this people. "In order to draw the bond of union closer, and to establish his own authority, Moses gave a new form of worship, and a system of religious ceremonies, the reverse of any thing known to any other age or country." Such was the narrow view the philosophical polytheist was compelled to take of what he remained ignorant; but when this truly profound genius drew from the depths of his own vast intellect—not misled by superficial observation or biassed by popular prejudices, per-

haps too, instructed by the authority of Josephus, or warmed by the platonic Philo Judæus, the Pagan awfully contemplated on the spiritual presence of the God of Israel — catching the inspiration of the Jewish faith, the Polytheist becomes himself a sublime Hebrew. Observing that the Jews suffer no visible representation of the Divinity, Tacitus describes "the unknown God." "The Jews acknowledge one God only, and Him they see in the mind; and Him they adore in contemplation. The God of the Jews is the great governing mind that directs and guides the whole frame of Nature, Eternal, Infinite, and neither capable of change, nor subject to decay." The Polytheist could not have applied this noble description to any one of his populace of fabulous Deities.

The third cause of the continued hatred of the Jewish people, was the unhappy position

which they held in society, through what are called the middle ages; ages which had lost the simplicity of primitive Christianity, and could make no progress in the enlightened Christianity of later times; dark ages and merciless men, who converted even Christianity into barbarism. Every where the Jews, deprived of citizenship, admitted on no terms of toleration, but skulking in great towns by connivance, or protected by some artful baron as "his Jews," this deserted race could only look for their resources in the most humiliating industry. When a whole people devote themselves to one great pursuit, one single art, they open sources of invention, they reach to a noble perfection. Unhappily for the present professors, that great pursuit, that single art, was, the commerce of money; and to render fortunes invisible, their genius produced the wonderful invention of bills of exchange; an object, like the art of printing,

become too familiar to be admired; the miracle has ceased and its utility only remains, yet both are sources of civilisation, and connect together, as in one commonwealth, the whole universe. Their successful pursuits worked their own fatality. The Hebrews became the reservoirs of the wealth of the strange lands where they were found. For the steel-clad baron, they were sponges to suck in as much water as they could hold, that his protecting hand, as he listed, might squeeze them to their last drop; for the luxurious abbots and the rosy canons, who heaped up their improvident bonds on the Hebrew, affecting the poverty he was to relieve, the Jews became the creditors of a whole province. Dark rumours spread that they crucified a child when they roasted the paschal lamb; poisoned wells, as they could live without water; that their physicians, for the great medical characters in Europe were Hebrews, got rid of their

Christian patients, by which they ruined their practice. They were made responsible for a long drought in a dry season, or a pestilence. All these rumours usually preceded an expulsion or a massacre, and all the Jewish bonds were burnt! The Jews have always been most degraded and persecuted in "FREE commercial cities" such as those of Hamburgh and Frankfort. It was their calamity to excel in the arts their neighbours practised. A society which becomes too powerful by their wealth, has ever been marked out for the spoil of the government, or the people; there are so many passions in human nature which are allied against a flourishing body. First hated, and then calumniated, they become the victims of state; and Justice veils her eyes during the popular suppression or destruction. Such was the fate of the order of the Templars, of the English monastic institutions, of the Jesuits throughout Europe!

The horrid crimes of which the Hebrews have been accused, could never bear an historical scrutiny. But thus have sects and parties calumniated each other. The Christians under the Romans were rendered odious by similar fictions. The earliest Reformers were thus blackened by the Papalists. The Romanists in our country were harassed by the same grievous arts. This historical problem is of no difficult solution. Whenever a heavy price is proclaimed to discover offenders, however innocent, offenders will be found; and for the informers there can be no higher price than a share in the confiscation.

But it was not only for their sordid arts and insulating habits that the Jews incurred the hatred of Christian nations, during the middle ages. They nourished an hereditary hatred against Christianity, and vomited forth libels against the Christian religion. A bibliomaniac might exhaust his passion in no small

library of anti-christian books*. The learned Wagenseil collected in two quarto volumes some of the most striking in his *Tela Ignea Satanæ*, and refuted the aspersions; but he might securely have left his "fiery arrows" to be quenched in the waters of oblivion, where they had already been plunged. For many centuries a rivalry still seemed to rage between the Abbot and the Rabbin; they were irreconcilable neighbours; and the vituperations of the Church were retorted by the invectives of the Synagogue, not less infamous, but more harmless, concealed as they must have been in the narrow circle of obscure Judaism.

At these "horrible attacks," as Wagenseil

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* The erudite Italian professor De Rossi has recently given a *Bibliotheca Judaica Anti-Christiana qua editi et inediti Judæorum adversus Christiani Religionem Libri Recensentur*, Parmæ 1800. This catalogue is extremely curious for an account of works which never emerged out of their manuscript state.

justly calls them, on the Christians, we need not be surprised. If we except a fabulous life of Jesus,—too vulgar a fiction, in every sense, ever to have been noticed, but with which on the Continent the Jews are too frequently reproached,—the writers were of a race inflated by their own imaginations, and deemed infamous for the very circumstance which made them haughty, mercilessly branded and badged. Had their masters through the middle ages been capable of reading the Gospel, assuredly those masters would have received a more grateful tribute; for the wretched had sought but for a resting place. The Jews in these Anti-christian productions, were in fact only anticipating what the Reformed and the Protestants subsequently not less vehemently performed. There are, indeed, some later writings which remain in manuscript, not in the collection of Wagenseil. These are composed chiefly

in the Spanish language by Jewish emigrants, recent from the tortures of the Inquisition, or the fires of an *Auto da Fé*. Effusions of heated minds in agony, Mount Sinai seems changed into Mount Vesuvius, while from all parts bursts forth the floating and burning lava. To the Hebrews, the Christians of Spain and Portugal, and Italy, in their image-worship, and numerous superstitious observances, appeared the most palpable of idolaters—whether they encountered the tinkling host in the streets to kneel as it passed, or were forced to swallow "su magestad," his majesty, as in the tumid Spanish taste they titled "the real presence;" whether they were watched if they did not light the lamps to the "bambino" nailed at their gates, or indignantly witnessed, or were told of some puppet-god shedding tears or sweating blood —with the Hebrews, as with ourselves, all

this was a renewal of "bowing the knee to Baal."

It is thought by some that the rigid Hebrew has an inherent national characteristic which must keep him distinct from other people. But we must distinguish between the rites and habits of his religion, which insulate him, and the character of the individual according to his locality. A shrewd observer tells us, "Whether you dine, or *pray*, or converse, or correspond with a pure and conscientious Jew, some peculiarity forces upon your notice that *he is not one of the people*; and in these *more than in the peculiarities of their religious creed*, rests the execution of the curse which still keeps the descendants of Israel a distinct and despised people among the Gentile nations*."

* A Tour in Germany, &c., 1824.

Inexorable Judaism! The priests of the idolaters were not more cruel in exacting from their heartless votaries the blood of their children, than thou wert in separating man from men. But is this a stroke from heaven, or an artifice of man? Manners, and habits, and notions, are long hereditary, but the Hebrew is often himself a foreigner, and this writer, who discovers that "the Jew is not one of the people," might attach the same observation to every stranger in England who bears the characteristics of his own nation. The Jewish people are not a nation, for they consist of many nations; they are Spanish or Portuguese, German and Polish, they are Italian, English, and French; and, like the chameleon, they reflect the colour of the spot they rest on. The people of Israel are like waters running through vast countries, tinged in their course with all the varieties of the soil where they

deposit themselves. After a few generations the Hebrews assimilate with the character, and are actuated by the feelings, of the nation where they become natives. What a distinct people are the Jews of London, of Paris, and of Amsterdam, from the Jews of Morocco, of Damascus, and the Volga!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ENGLISH JEWS.

WHO are the English Jews? I doubt whether any precise notion of this people has been formed either by Jew or Christian. The Hebrews, who so long persisted in the neglect of their own history, have few or no recollections of their ancestors in this country; and the Christian confounds an heterogeneous mixture of Jewish races, and is apt to judge erroneously of them all.

I am not writing the history of the Jews, for antiquaries, but the Genius of Judaism for philosophers. I therefore pass over a period in our own history, in which it is supposed there were no Jews in England—the reigns

of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I. My researches might show that they were not then unknown in this country. Had there been no Jews in England, would that luminary of law, Sir Edward Coke, have needed to inveigh against the Jews as "Infidels and Turks," delivering them all alike to the devil: stigmatised and infamous persons, "*perpetui inimici*," says Littleton, "and not admissible as witnesses." Our philosophical curiosity is amused in tracing the slow steps by which a nation approaches common humanity and common sense. The servile sages of the law, have rarely been the leaders of public opinion; groping after doubtful precedents, and entrenching themselves behind statutes made for the genius of other times. Judge Hale and our lawyers gradually retreated from this legal excommunication. Under Charles II, Lord Keeper North found no difficulty in swearing a Jew on his

Pentateuch, and Acts of Parliament under the Georges overturned the patriarchal opinion of the Lord Chief Justice Coke—who, had he now lived, would have started from the bench at the apparition of a Jewish counsellor! or that one of the most profound and luminous juri-consults in Europe should be a Jew!

Cromwell treated the Jews much like Napoleon; he did nothing more for them than what his policy required. He took a statesman's view, and did a statesman's act. He wished to render their commercial knowledge useful to his own financial operations. It was then a question, theological and civil, whether it were lawful to admit them? His divines were heard in council; he declared there was nothing but confusion in their counsels; and, as had been his first intention, he allowed a limited number to settle in London, and to have synagogues. They were sufficiently numerous to celebrate the

feast of tabernacles in booths, on the borders of the Thames. They imprudently thought they had found a new Judea: but this public rejoicing would only occasion another turning over of the texts of "the gilt pocket bibles" of the puritanical doctors; and the feast of the tabernacles was probably not repeated, for we find new inquiries afloat, upon what terms they were admitted; and they were reminded that the old act of banishment of Edward I. had not been repealed. They retired into their silent quarters.

I recollect my astonishment in looking over the memoirs of the Royal Academy of Lisbon, of modern date, to find a considerable portion occupied by subjects of Jewish erudition, and on Jewish writers in the first age of the Portuguese monarchy, to the seventeenth century. The memoirs of no other national academy display this recondite knowledge, and this great delight in Jewish writers. The philosophical

physician of the embassy enlightened me; he assured me that the tenderness for the religion of their fathers was excessive; and that many public characters, in the agony of their religious consciences, had often flown to the synagogues of England and Holland. It was this feeling, which, notwithstanding their *Autos da Fé*, the government itself could no longer disguise. Several edicts are now before me; the last issued in 1773. Here is formally abolished the odious distinction of *Christianos Novos*, and *Christianos Velhos*,—New and Old Christians, which had so long tormented the half-Judaised Portuguese. It even allows the children of Moses to hold their festivals; it prohibits the compulsion of baptism; it relieves them from any tribute or tax hitherto levied on Jews; and it makes honourable mention, by name, of certain officers of state who were Jews, yet had been prime ministers, and trea-

surers; and finally it declares, that "the blood of the Hebrews is the blood of our apostles, our deans, our presbyters, and our bishops." All this may be confirmed by a recent casual observation of Madame Junot, the Duchess of Abrantes: "The Portuguese nation," she writes, "though *three parts Jewish*, are extremely tenacious of admitting amongst them any persons who do not bring good proofs of their purity of blood."

It was this race which formed the first general settlement of Jews in England; Spanish and Portuguese fugitives from the infernal fires of the Autôs da Fé, and the living graves of the Inquisition. Ships freighted with Jewish families and Jewish property, landed on the shores of England and Holland. Many escaped without any preparation, to save their lives by a day. They were composed of all ranks, noblemen, officers, learned physicians, and opulent

merchants: many conveyed great wealth, and there were individuals who maintained in England a ducal establishment. The first names of the Portuguese nation may still be traced in their present descendants, who occupy very different situations. The Villa Reals, the Alvarez, the Mendez, the Francos, the Rebellos, the De Silvas, the Garcias, the D'Aguilars, the Souzas, the De Castros, the Salvadors, and a long list, betray their Lusitanian lineage.

These distinguished persons for many years constituted what is called the community of Spanish and Portuguese Jews of London. The nobler families who brought wealth, assumed their rank in society; the mercantile class opened new sources of commerce, and unquestionably the Lisbon trade must have flourished. Their origin here is still attested by the circumstance that their translated prayers and their Bible are in

Spanish, and all their by-laws and judicial and other civil documents, are still issued in the Portuguese language. Many of their physicians obtained great practice in England and in Holland. In the science of medicine the Jews had been eminent from very remote æras. The physician of Henry IV. of France was a Jew, and at his desire his bones were carried to the Holy Land: Voltaire inscribed an epistle to the Jewish physician, Isaac de Silva.

These Portuguese Jews at London, could never drop their national characteristic; they were remarked for their haughtiness, their high sense of honour, and their stately manners. Subsequently, Jewish emigrants flocked from Germany, and Poland, and Barbary,—a race in every respect of an inferior rank. Their entrance into these realms was silent, and no record has fallen in my researches, which imparts the dignity of history. The

Portuguese Grandees shrunk from their contact; they looked on those lees of the people in bitter scorn, and through a long century the contumely was never forgiven. In every respect these differing races moved in contrast. The one opulent and high-minded; the other humiliated by indigence, and pursuing the meanest, and not seldom the most disreputable, crafts. The one indolent, polished, and luxurious; the other, with offensive habits, active and penurious, hardy in frame, and shrewd in intellect. The one splendid in dress and equipage, while the abject Polander still retained the beard commanded by Moses with the gaberdine. The one, though yet too proud to adopt the idiom of his new country, was yet critical in his own; scientific and literary, while the other, totally illiterate, adhered to a barbarous Hebrew dialect. From the first, different synagogues separated them; every intercourse was for-

bidden; the haughty Lusitanian Jew would have returned to the fires of Lisbon, ere he condescended to an intermarriage with the Jew of Alsace or Warsaw. The mutual hatred of these Jews reminds one of the Turks and Persians, who, if one called the other dogs, the other declared against asses.—Among ourselves, these two classes of Jews are still known as the Portuguese and the German Jews, and we often wonder how and why they are divided.

Such was the state of the Jews in England, and likewise in Holland, where the same circumstances had occurred about half a century ago; when a great revolution was occurring with this little people.

A Jewish philosopher, for there have been philosophers among this unphilosophical nation, once observed that the wealth of a Jewish family never outlasted two generations; and the reason he assigned was that

all their property was personal, for they were prohibited from having any stable property, as landholders. This seems verified in the present history of the Portuguese Jewish settlers. The pride and the passion for splendour of the first race in England, who were not mercantile men, and probably very unskilful stewards, fell to their dissipating heirs; and this race, like torches, consumed themselves in their own brilliancy. The Salvadors, the Francos, the Mendezs, were once the ornaments of fashionable drawing rooms, but none of these had other property than that which "maketh itself wings and flieth." At that day the literal bigotry of our lawyers insisted that no Jew could even purchase the house he lived in. This was long credited, till later and more sagacious counsellors overturned the obsolete opinion.

The first and second generation of the

Portuguese Jews resided in retired quarters in the city; then its mansions were not deserted even by our own merchants. As foreigners and as Hebrews such a locality was preferred, for their language and their habits continued to be Portuguese. Their sons would become more familiar with our own. A third generation were natives. A fourth were purely English. About the time of the first George this foreign race were zealously national; firm adherents to the Protestant succession. A Romanist on the throne for them would have been reviving the terror their relatives had flown from, and even as late as this period fresh fugitives landed on our coasts. It is evident that the Jews, for every protecting government, become the most zealous patriots. I do not know that their patriotism springs from the most elevated source—it lies more level with common feelings, but it will never

dry. The Hebrew identifies his interests with those of the country; their wealth is his wealth; their victories secure his prosperity. On several trying occasions, both in England and in Holland, they have laid on the altar of public safety noble sacrifices of their lives and their fortunes. In recent times, faithful to a paternal government, they have marched in the armies of European sovereigns. Prussia has many Jewish officers; France, since her regeneration, has counted numerous Israelites in her *Ecole Polytechnique*, and the blood of Israel profusely flowed in the fields of Waterloo. The King of Holland has a complete regiment of gallant Hebrews. All this confirms what I have already asserted, that every native Jew, as a political being, becomes distinct from the Jew of any other nation. If the Jewish military under the King of Holland were to encounter the French Israelites, the combat would be between the Dutch and the French. The Hebrew adopts

the hostilities and the alliances of the land where he was born—he calls himself by the name of his country.

To return to our English Jews. They had the interest to procure the famous Jew bill of 1753 to pass; but not the power to still the popular clamour which repealed it.

I come now to their domestic history. A small community, like a great nation, has its meridian and its decline. The Portuguese opulence decayed, no eminent person succeeded to the splendid race, who have only left heirs to their names. By the chances and changes of fortune, some of the German Jews emerged from their lowly state; skilled in the arts, and the artifices of finance, the wealth of the Jewish nation is probably deposited in their coffers, and these northern Jews are even courted by the humble descendants of their haughty Portuguese brethren. The dates of fortune are prescribed.

It is the singular result of the fortunes of

"the peculiar people" that, in writing their annals, the historian must necessarily digress into those of other nations. The great emigration of the Jews into England was occasioned by a renewal of the persecutions of the Inquisition, particularly in Portugal. The truth is, and an extraordinary truth it will appear, the greater part of the Portuguese nation are absolutely Jewish. At the first great expulsion from Spain it has been said that fifty thousand families had been driven into Portugal, and one hundred and forty thousand scattered in the East. Those whose fathers had received baptism were distinguished as *Christianos Novos*, who became odious to those whose origin was deemed purer. They were numerous, and most of them secretly Judaised. They were known by their baptismal names, but often among themselves they had preserved their more ancient denominations. The Portuguese have been always reproached

by their ecclesiastics as encouraging too great a tenderness for the perfidious Jews. "A few," says a friar, "have been burnt at Lisbon, but not enough; for they still grow up like that fabulous serpent of Hercules, every head you destroy produces seven, or seventy. If we had *more regular Autôs* they might in time clear the country*." That the Portuguese are almost wholly Judaic in their descent, will appear from an anecdote told me by the ancient resident physician of the Portuguese embassy. Under the administration of the great Pombal, the priestly party had persuaded King Joseph to renew that badge of Judaism—the yellow hat—to mark the numerous Christianos Novos among his subjects. The edict was prepared. On the following morning the minister appeared before

* Breve discurso contra a heretica perfida do Judaismo. Par Vicente da Costa Mattos. Lisboa, 1622.

his majesty with three yellow hats—one he offered to the King, another he brought for the Grand Inquisitor, and the third for his own head. "I obey your majesty's order," said the minister, "in providing these badges to be worn by those whose blood has been tainted by Judaism."

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

WHATEVER political boon Christians may concede to their ancient brothers, it is quite evident that the social reform of the English Jews must mainly depend upon themselves. It would be an act of political justice that the name of Briton, which now must be attached to the Hebrew born in the dominions of Great Britain, should no longer be held in disregard; and it would be an act of political wisdom to remove all those civil disabilities and privations which hitherto have aggrieved and degraded so considerable a portion of our fellow subjects. It is not less evident that there are certain privileges

which a Christian government can never concede to a Jewish subject.

But should the Jews be admitted to the equality of citizens, and, notwithstanding, not amalgamate with citizenship; if amidst freedom the Hebrew cannot be free, their moral and political reform will remain incomplete. Napoleon discovered that the jealous genius of Judaism resisted a social union with his nation at the voice of the Rabbin, and the imperial seducer could only calculate by the votes of his submissive Israelites. The synagogue was against him, but not the synagoguers—the priesthood, but not the people. To blend the severity of oriental Judaism with the pliant conformity of European Christianity, has long formed the despair of the Christian and the Jew when equally enlightened. The difficulty consists in the rigid Hebrew associating with his fellow Christians—from the Mosaic prohibi-

tion of aliments, and from the innumerable customs which are the inventions of the Rabbins.

Let us not dispute with the Jews on the perpetuity of the Law of Moses; it will be sufficient to show that it cannot be perpetuated.

MORTERA, the great champion of Judaism, among his proofs of the truth of the Law of Moses has this one, that "the divine law alone is sufficient to govern the people of Israel; and it requires no other science, nor knowledge, *in any occurrence which can happen to man.*" From the same Rabbinical school, as we have already shown*, it is their creed that "every tittle of their code was the dictation of God himself." With the tenfold cecity of zeal without reason, they have carried the fiction of inspiration even to its

* See pp. 93, 95, and 210.

words, its syllables, and its letters; and accepting literally the term "everlasting," they are still extending that law to objects which have ceased to be.

We might have expected that the votaries of the Law of Moses would ere now have read their sacred code with a clearer and more intelligent spirit, than did their ancestors in the last century. Biblical studies and critical theology, the philosophical spirit of our own times has advanced beyond our hopes; and the hallowed localities of the Israelitish annals are not more familiar to our travellers than the amplifications and hyperboles of the oriental style are to our students. The Hebrew might have been taught to weigh some of his Hebraisms, and often to discern where the indefinite is used for the definite; and by the genius of the language and the age of the writings, to qualify those rhetorical expressions, which, in a volume not sacred, he would justly comprehend.

Did Moses imagine that his government would be established for ever, and that his people should possess their soil "everlastingly?" Far from this; the sublime legislator dreaded the slightest intercourse of his insulated people with their neighbours. Nor could the inspired legislator deem that an ordinance which was in its nature temporary and local, could by any human contrivance be made of perpetual obligation, and universal in its practice. Moses contemplated the temporal prosperity of his people of children, and all his views are limited to the regions where they flourished. The splendid ceremonial; the forbidden aliments; the civil regulations; the sumptuary laws; the medical precepts; and the minute domestic regulations, could only be laws as long as they were practicable, salutary, and desirable —and above all while the nation maintained its independence.

But this code they assert is not only per-

petual, but to be observed, "without diminution or addition." A people who deem their laws immutable, at length will come to have laws for what does not exist, and for what does exist they are without laws. All laws which cease to be efficient annul themselves; and, from altered circumstances, laws may become impediments to the very purpose of their institution.

It is evident to all men, but Hebrews who still cling to the ignorant pride of a semi-civilised race, that a considerable portion of the Mosaic code could not be designed for perpetuity, but was accommodated to immediate purposes. Many laws, therefore, have fallen extinct with their objects. The motives which induced Moses to forbid the eating of pork, of shell-fish, and other aliments, no longer prevail in another climate, and among a race who are not idolaters. Ordinances relating to the seven Canaanean nations could

only be absolute while those hordes existed. Customs of the East, prescribed as religious rites, frequent ablutions, and living in bowery tabernacles in the chill of autumn, would not have been commanded in the cold, or even in the temperate zones. The laws are not perpetual which relate to certain contagious maladies which have disappeared, while other prevalent diseases have arisen for which Moses could provide no laws. Would the Hebrew at this day inflict punishments peculiar to the East, because they are decreed by the Mosaic code? The whole constitution of Israel has passed away; the sacrifice and the sacrificer have vanished; the altar sunk with the throne. A conquered people ridiculously exist as if they were in a state independent, amidst the miseries and the degradations of twenty centuries.

But while the laws of the Sacred Code

admit of such obvious explanations, and cannot be perpetuated in all times and in all places, and, in opposition to the vain credulity of its followers, may well allow both of "diminution and addition," strange to say, a spurious legislation, by the artifices of an unrelenting faction, to this late day tyrannises over the Jewish people. The infinite multiplicity of customs, and gross superstitions, as ridiculous as once were those of witchcraft, the mere inventions of their Talmudical doctors, are incorporated in their faith, in their ceremonies, and their daily customs. These scholastic impostures have bound them hand and foot, and cast them into the cavern of the lone and sullen Genius of Rabbinical Judaism, cutting them off from the great family of mankind, and perpetuating their sorrows and their shame.

Far be it from us to wound tender consciences, or to torture with religious terrors

thoughtful minds among the children of Israel. But let the Rabbinicals inquire who were these Rabbins, who, for two thousand years, constituted themselves the arbiters of the laws of Moses; and whose traditions form an integral part of the Divine Code? So they assert! Ingenious sophists and visionary enthusiasts, some dreamers and many dotards, grave expounders of the most ridiculous observances, and not a few ambitious spirits, haughty with domination—these formed, for the most part, the consistory of these Jewish sages. We know the artifice they practised in sealing up the national mind of their people, by adopting that Asiatic principle, that all knowledge was foolishness which was not to be found in their own Encyclopædia and Koran—their Talmud! From age to age they went on corrupting the simplicity of their antique creed; forging chains upon chains for their credulous pup-

pets, and who cannot yet escape from the malignant influence of a doctrinal government.

I would implore the Jews to begin to educate their youth as the youth of Europe, and not of Palestine; let their Talmud be removed to an elevated shelf, to be consulted as a curiosity of antiquity, and not as a manual of education. Many, indeed, among the higher classes of the Hebrews, have attempted to educate their children in Christian schools, for they have no others; but the conflict of the parental feelings, of their own good sense with the excluding dicta of the Talmudists—the forbidden food and the omitted customs—have scared even the intelligent among them. The civil and political fusion of the Jewish with their fellow-citizens, must commence by rejecting every anti-social principle; let them only separate to hasten to the Church and to the Syna-

gogue. The Hebrew, exulting in his immutable law, has yet to learn that a wise legislature, in accommodating itself to the times, and to the wants of the people, suspends or executes laws as the juncture may require. The chief end of laws is not only their observance, but the good of the people. *Salus Populi suprema Lex.* Let them remember that their great ancestor, Judas Maccabeus, fought on the Sabbath-day; for, he said, "It is not as it was heretofore with us!" To give themselves of their superstitions will not be the least difficult conversion of the Jews. The common enjoyments of civil rights will neither endanger the genius of Judaism, nor the genius of Christianity.

MEADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, BOUVERIE STREET

00067983

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 06 February, 2016